

## ABSTRACT

Christie Marie Powell, NIMBLE OR NOT? PIVOTING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL TO EMBRACE CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PRACTICE (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of international schools presents challenges for students, teachers and administrators. Using a participatory action research (PAR) methodology that included co-practitioner researchers (CPR), the study examines the capacity of five middle school teachers supported by a director of curriculum and instruction in a large SE Asian international school to understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practices to support the learning of increasingly diverse students. In exploring the PAR impact on leadership stances and practice, findings indicate a strong relationship between Bryk's (2015) Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles of collective inquiry using qualitative evidence and the ability of teachers as teams of co-teachers to make positive, iterative changes in their planning and acting for learning. The PAR study underscores the importance of the intrinsic relationship between the quality of planning for learning and the quality of co-teaching partners collectively acting in support of student learning. Further, the evidence confirms that participation as a PAR co-practitioner researcher constituted a rich leadership learning experience for teachers and has the potential to permeate and inform their endeavors as teachers and teacher-leaders. Finally, the results offer cautionary evidence for international schools who are facing similar demographic changes. Evidence points to an increasing need for clarity in school priorities in the expectations for equity in learning. Unless school leadership is fully cognizant of how the institutional culture unwittingly compromises teacher efforts, they may intentionally or unintentionally interrupt teachers' ability to embrace and act on principles of high-quality learning – for themselves and for students.



NIMBLE OR NOT? PIVOTING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL TO EMBRACE  
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PRACTICE

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by

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## **DEDICATION**

For Tristan and Jarrett, my beautiful sons, with whom and for whom I aspire to be an intentional, thoughtful internationally-minded citizen and international school leader.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I must acknowledge the vision and risk-taking of Matt Militello and Lynda Tredway for daring to dream big and making this program a reality. There is not another doctoral program on the planet in which I would have rather been a student. I am grateful for the camaraderie and support of my fellow cohort members from whom I've learned and grown and with whom I will always share fellowship. I thank Lynda for showing me what true wisdom and being a warrior for equity really looks like. Thank you for being an amazing mentor and editor. I thank my husband, Edgar, for his patience and support. I am grateful to my entire extended family who has always rallied behind my endeavors and international life and to my parents, John and Bonnie Powell, for always believing in me. The experience of the program and the valuable leadership and personal learning growth, however, would not have been possible without the commitment and spirit of my fellow CPR members: CM, NB, DC, MR, PB, RB and SK. Thank you for your trust and thoughtful time in what has been one of the most rewarding and life-giving professional and personal endeavors in my life.

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## CHAPTER 1: NAMING & FRAMING THE FOCUS OF PRACTICE (FOP)

### Introduction

This is the value of the teacher, who looks at a face and says there's something behind that and I want to reach that person, I want to influence that person, I want to encourage that person, I want to enrich, I want to call out that person who is behind that face, behind that color, behind that language, behind that tradition, behind that culture. I believe you can do it. I know what was done for me. Maya Angelou

Global-ready and internationally-minded are but two of the common buzz words in International Baccalaureate (IB) international schools. Keen on diversity, inclusivity, multilingualism and community-based inquiry, reflection and action, the IB proclaims: “The aim of all programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world” (Mission, n.d., p. 1). One student at a time. Through the kind of teacher Maya Angelou describes above. Invaluable.

As an authorized IB World School, Hayward International School is obliged to live the IB mission in pursuit of its own vision: *“Provide the best teaching and learning so that all can achieve more than they believe they can.”* But what *is* the best teaching and learning for equitable, high achievement in pursuit of international mindedness for students in international schools today? And how do we ensure we provide and grow teachers who can fulfill the value of Angelou’s vision?

Traditionally, American international schools, as expensive private schools, served a select group of primarily English-speaking students whose parents were part of the diplomatic corps, international industry, or the extensive non-governmental organization (NGO) network, and, in some cases, the elite or wealthy of the country in which they operated or members of missionary groups. Teaching and learning experiences that were rigorous and geared toward high academic achievement and selective college admissions were key and, in many respects, still are. Yet, globalization and the resulting economic

realities have shifted the demographics of the student population in many international schools; these schools now face the challenge of pursuing their guiding principles with a different group of diverse learners (see Table 1). The evolution begs the question: How do we ensure equitable, quality teaching and learning with a changing culturally and linguistically diverse population?

Hayward International School is located in the midst of a highly competitive SE Asia economy and changing demographics as described above. Known for its rapid growth, the school has become, in the short years of its existence, a Western Association of Schools and Colleges and Council of International Schools (WASC/CIS) accredited school and full International Baccalaureate (IB) World authorized school offering the full line of IB Programmes – the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) - as well as the Advanced Placement Program. Only ten years old, the school has grown from 70 to over 3,000 students from 67 passport countries speaking 47 different mother tongues.

A significant change in student population over the last few years, prompted by the economic landscape, resulted in more than doubling the number of English language learners (ELLs) (see Table 1), particularly impacting the upper elementary, middle and high schools. In addition, the board-level decision to add a Sheltered English as an Additional Language (SEAL) program at each year level in the Elementary and in core subject areas in the secondary through Grade 8 brought in a large number of non-English speakers to the school for whom the language of instruction is English.

The SEAL classes are essentially self-contained classrooms that consist solely of beginning language learners, who would not have met the school's entry requirements in past years. The demographics shift has further challenged the school, the teachers, and, of course, the ELL students. Unfortunately, due to the rapid introduction of the SEAL program, the

Table 1

*English as an Additional Language (EAL) Population at Hayward*

Grade Level	SY 2014-2015 Total # of Mainstream EAL students	SY 2015-2016 Total # of Mainstream EAL students	SY 2016-2017 Total # of Mainstream and Sheltered EAL students	SY 2017-2018 Total # of Mainstream and Sheltered EAL students	SY 2018-2019 Total # of Mainstream and Sheltered EAL students
Grade 1	34	94	56	43	47
Grade 2	37	64	53	34	86
Grade 3	30	71	45	38	45
Grade 4	25	52	61	38	44
Grade 5	16	38	39	66	55
Grade 6	12	26	39	44	43
Grade 7	11	16	38	43	46
Grade 8	9	28	46	42	54
Grade 9	8	26	32	55	28

changes have not always been met with equal attention to resourcing or providing the teachers and students with a rich supportive environment for confident, quality teaching and learning. The real and pressing problem led to teacher dissatisfaction and decreased efficacy. According to the 2016 Voice of the Employee survey (a yearly survey on employee satisfaction that is given by the school's parent-company) the teachers rated this item poorly: "I receive the appropriate training and support to do my job to the best of my ability."

And teachers matter most when it comes to high quality teaching and learning. Tucker and Stronge (2005) indicate that "[y]ears of research on teacher quality support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement" (p. 5). Effective teachers both create a strong affective environment as well as the responsive learning progressions that invite inspired, supported learning. While Hayward's teachers are certainly not "empty vessels", in my interactions with them, they have been forthright in indicating they do not have the skill set or resources to create either a highly effective environment or to consistently deliver high quality learning in the face of the changing demographics of the school.

Secondary classroom observation data and anecdotal records indicated an overwhelming "stand and deliver" model of lecture and assignment versus a teaching model with quality evidence-based practices in place and a balance of care for the social-emotional aspect of learning and the environment. We can attribute some challenges to past recruiting practices (hiring of college lecturers in an attempt to inject a traditional form of academic "rigor"), past leadership and learning practice (moving the curriculum aims down two grade levels – e.g., making Algebra 1 the core Grade 7 math course – in an effort to broadcast a commitment to academic rigor), and the general interpretation - without thoughtful dialogue - of how we could live our school vision statement, which was focused on high levels of

traditional academic rigor and achievement. The challenges were particularly resonant in our secondary school with Advanced Placement and Diploma Programme courses as the only pathways to graduation.

With a new leadership and advisory board members in place and the school moving to implement the first comprehensive curriculum inquiry teams, these factors, together with the changing demographics of the school, which are forecasted to continue (e.g., more English Language Learners), made the time ripe for the creation of a collective, living, *supported* vision for ‘the best teaching and learning so that all can achieve more than they believe they can’. Thus, I was interested in focusing on engaging teachers in more consistent and coherent professional learning and dialogue in order to increase the academic discourse in the school and support the implementation of effective culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP).

### **Focus of Practice**

Throughout the project, English language learners comprised approximately 16% of the student population at Hayward; however, this is a conservative estimate based only on those students designated as EAL learners from Grades 1-9. The SEAL program is set to continue and, as it does, so will the year-on-year admission of ELL students into mainstream classes. Current numbers indicate that by 2020, close to 50% of each level may be ELLs at various levels of proficiency on the English language learning continuum. The importance of understanding how to support teachers in providing effective, equitable high-quality learning for these students is critical. Thus, the focus of practice of the participatory action research project (PAR) emerged: “How can we build the capacity of middle school SEAL teachers to understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice to impact the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse?”

This important issue for the school is one in which the entire community has an investment. The school runs the risk of losing its English as a first language students *as well as* its popularity for other Asian students if we are unable to balance the change in the student body with maintaining the quality of teaching and learning. Hayward, of course, desires to maintain its status as an “American International School”. And because of the tremendously competitive nature of Singapore, which is becoming more so in the current economic climate, we, as a school, needed critical conversations about how to accomplish this goal in an inclusive and positive manner. It is not a hyperbole to say that the future, and certainly the culture and climate, of the school depends on this focus of practice.

A second and more deeply important reason to focus on this challenge is the philosophical disagreement among the faculty about the purpose of international schooling. Many of the faculty, with experience in international schools, view international schools as schools that have the right and privilege to exercise selective admission and, therefore, believe that right should be exercised (VOE, 2017). Further, as Pearce (2013) posits, by and large, international educators have been primarily trained in the educational norms of their home country, and international schools have largely been transplanted national education systems. He bemoans the lack of an “actual discursive community in international education” (Pearce, 2013, p. 68); in an analysis of the discourse of international teachers as measured by the programs of the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) annual conference and the articles in the *International School Journal* over time, Pearce (2013) surmises “that discourse in international education has changed little over the last 40 years” (p. 74).

As we discuss international-mindedness, inclusion and diversity, we have not been fully aware of the kinds of change this requires of us as educational organizations. The need for a change in discourse is reaching critical levels. We have been somewhat slow, philosophically, to fully grasp how we need to respond to the changing economic and



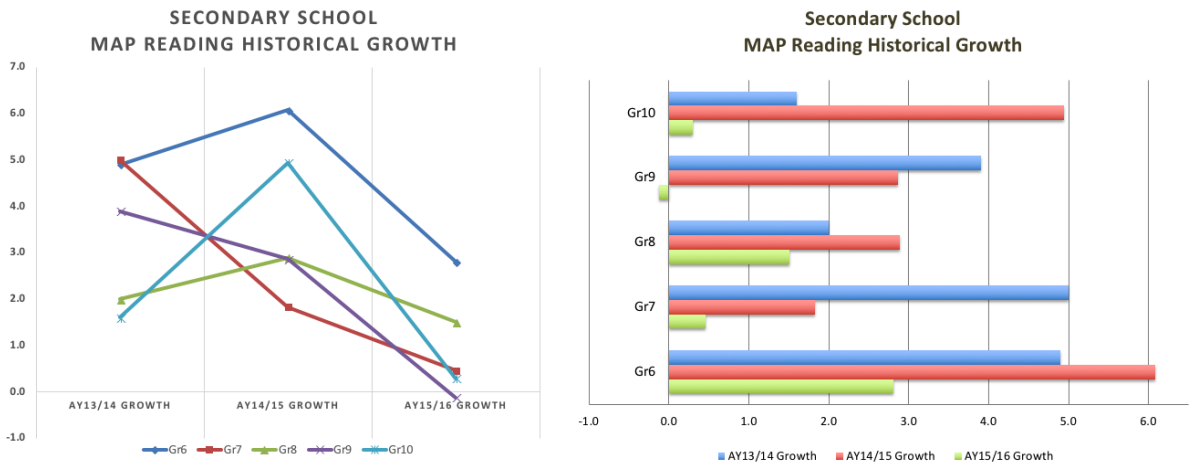
political landscape. With the rise of the middle-class in China and India, for example, far larger numbers of particular cultural groups are looking toward international schools as a gateway to increased choice and university acceptance in the U.S. and other Western countries – in other words, looking to international schools and a strong English language foundation as a means of social mobility (Labaree, 2008; Wechsler, 2017).

The change required a different skill set from teachers and a proactive, open-minded approach to problem solving within the school – as is the case with most change. We heeded the need to respond to the call to action and to engage in change through school-based collaboration. In pursuit of “we” solutions, we focused on building coherent professional learning dialogue around culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) and seeking research-based ways to support teachers in their growing practice (Grubb & Tredway, 2010). In the following section to discuss the FoP, I present the evidence for the focus of practice, the frameworks that influence the FoP, the improvement goal, and the purpose and theory of action.

### **Evidence**

Over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, I watched the change in the demographics of the school as depicted in Table 1 in combination with a corresponding decrease in student reading scores – particularly in the secondary (see Figure 1). These quantitative data combined with the qualitative data of teacher voice as measured by comments on the annual Voice of the Employee survey (an annual survey given by the parent-company) provided evidence that there was a developing challenge with our diverse learners that was worthy of further research and action.

With these data as the foundation, we had conversations regarding literacy and learning with a diverse group of teachers from across divisions and disciplines during the 2016-2017 school year. A visit from an outside IB MYP authorization team provided



*Figure 1. Reading scores as measured by measures of academic progress assessment.*

additional qualitative feedback on the urgency to support all teachers as language teachers.

Finally, in a student voice survey mid-year, numerous comments from diverse students as to their increasing affective and cognitive isolation indicated the need for change:

English language is permanent barrier for me, but in school probably almost people judge my ability by my English speaking skill I think that did't [sic] not present everything, like, I can understand what's you guys saying, I also have some idea but you guys didn't give me any chance. due to this reason, people don't want be friends, I am really lonely sometime (Voice of the Student Survey, 2016).

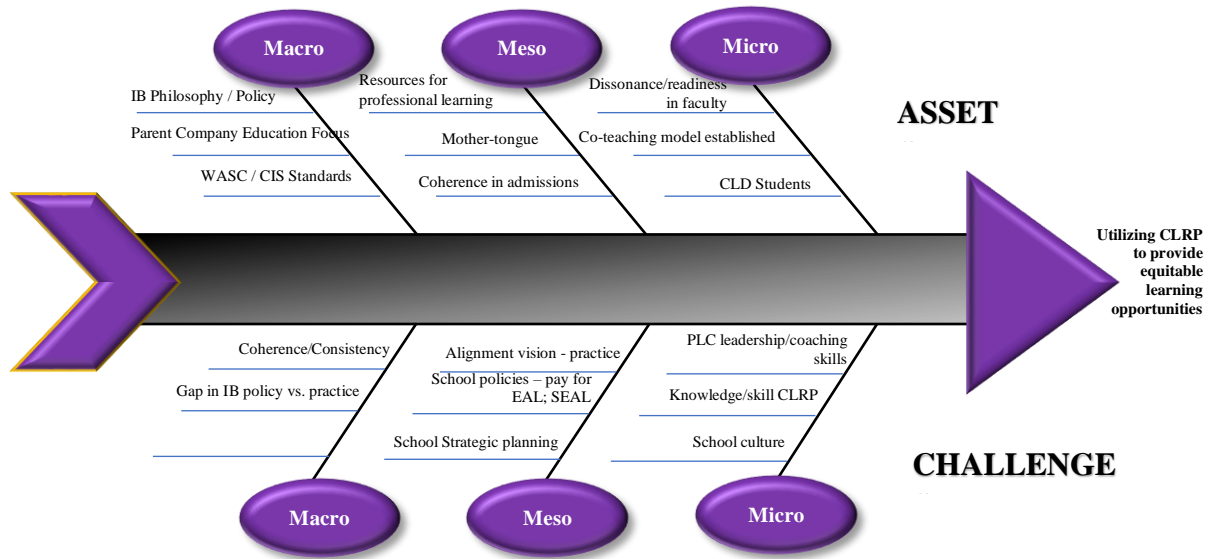
The resulting themes from analyzing the reports and surveys unequivocally pointed to a pressing need to consider how we can build the capacity of our teachers to improve the learning of our students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

Fortunately, the majority of the professional teaching faculty at Hayward embraced initial opportunities of support including enrollment in a well-regarded on-line Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) course from the Center of Applied Linguistics (80+ faculty throughout the school trained in the first semester of the 2016-17 school year and by Fall 2018, 345 educators trained). As a result, in Fall 2016, they developed learning community action plans across the school focused on key elements of literacy learning. Further, the ownership and leadership of the school engaged in the development of better structures and a plan for increased human resources to support ELL students and teaching and learning. Recognition of the opportunity and challenge that we had in front of us at the outset of the PAR project, and the willingness to engage in productive, positive professional learning community dialogue were critical assets. In addition, key individuals such as the Deputy Head of School and the Director of English as an Additional Language (EAL) together with the Director of Curriculum and Assessment have remained passionate and committed to creating conditions that support culturally and linguistically responsive practice throughout the school.

I considered other assets as I developed the FoP and the PAR project. Certainly, our accrediting and authorization bodies forward a number of standards and practices and policy recommendations that support CLRP. Additionally, the school is well-resourced for professional learning and has already implemented professional learning communities, albeit, not entirely successfully. As such, we capitalized on numerous assets as this focus of practice gained momentum. And, because of the focus on creating the conditions for participatory reflection and action within a learning community, many of the challenges, including school culture, knowledge and skill and leadership/coaching needs, were part of the co-researcher practitioner (CPR) team's learning work from the start of the project (see Figure 2 for an analysis of the assets and challenges).

In addition, the literature base for the focus of practice, discussed more completely in Chapter 2, draws from various areas including language acquisition, best practice for language learners, bilingualism in international schools and all informed the PAR project. School conditions that promoted language learning included a focus on culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership; and literature surrounding effective professional learning included principles for successful professional learning communities. Several important conclusions resonate in the literature. Diverse classrooms of today coupled with the high expectations of learning for all students make teachers' work exceedingly complex (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). Secondly, within this complexity, we needed to maintain a laser-like focus on supporting teachers to become reflective practitioners with the knowledge and skill to respond effectively to the complexity of the landscape they are confronted with on a daily basis. Within the art and science of teaching, we needed to draw on ever-evolving knowledge and skill to be nimble as teachers and as teacher-leaders. As Hawley and Valli (1999) point out, "improvement of schools requires the improvement of teaching" (p. 128). There is no short cut.

## Fishbone Diagram: Analysis of FOP



*Figure 2.* Fishbone diagram: Analysis of assets and challenges of FOP.

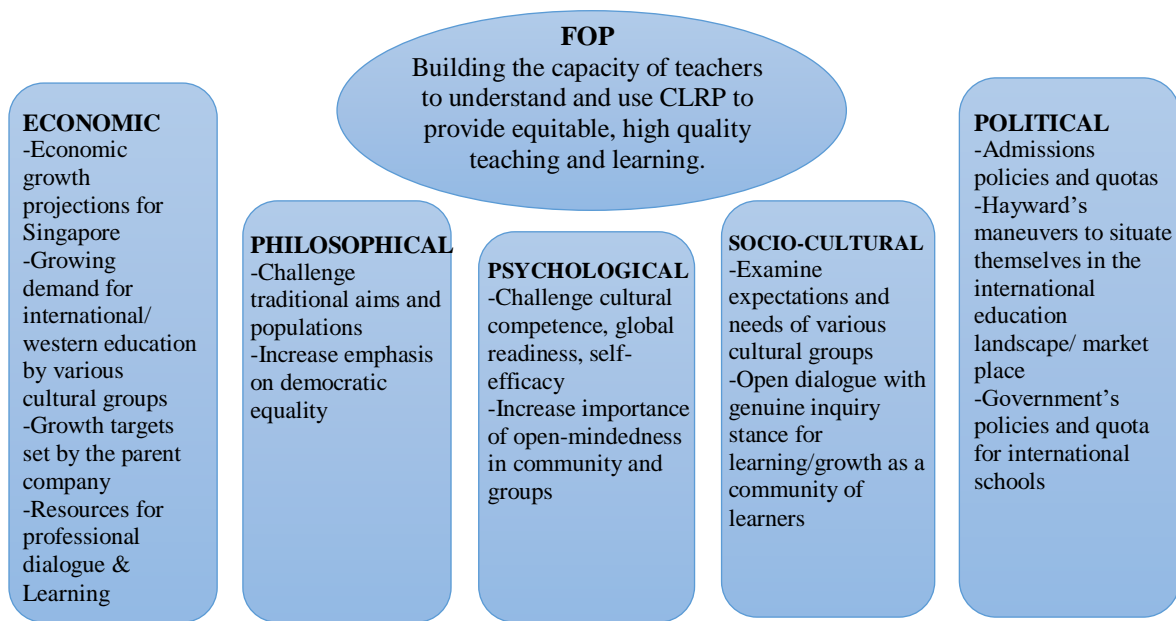
The assets informed our work; however, significant challenges had the potential to hinder it as well – challenges such as the teacher turnover rate and teachers viewing teaching as an 8am-5pm job. Levels of trust were not particularly high as high turnover compromised building relationships. The lack of trust and personal-professional involvement and commitment was often a significant challenge. In addition, during the project, the school underwent a wholesale strategic planning exercise beginning in Fall 2017. While the planning group acknowledged the increasing need to be responsive to our growing diverse student body through the development and implementation of a teaching and learning policy that supported CLRP as an indicator of high quality learning, other significant school-wide projects and priorities competed for attention in the planning and implementation process.

### **Framework for the Focus of Practice**

As we explored the ways in which teacher practice could be developed and sustained to achieve the school vision for our culturally and linguistically diverse learners, a variety of theoretical frames played a role. Figure 3 depicts economic and political, philosophical and psychological, and socio-cultural frames.

#### **Economics and Politics**

The growth projections for the SE Asian city inform the growth and/or maintenance strategy of the school's parent company. Further, the growing demand for international/western education and the ability to self-fund that education throughout SE Asia creates a market to tap into. This presents a political challenge, however, because a long-held guideline for most American international schools has been to ensure that no more than 20% of the student body be made up of any one ethnic or cultural group outside of holding an American passport. Ostensibly, the policy has been a way of ensuring balance as an international school and assuring American parents of a strong American presence – which, of course, has a set of political, philosophical and psychological implications.



*Figure 3.* Frames for focus of practice.

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## **Philosophical**

As the percentages of different cultural groups grow and the American and English as a first language population languishes, we encounter a philosophical challenge to the long-held beliefs about the population and aims of American International Schools. By emphasizing democratic equality and social mobility as key aims of schooling, we call into question the capacity and psychological base of the system itself to fulfill the promise of a high quality, equitable education for all (Labaree, 2008). How nimble are American International Schools?

## **Psychological and Socio-Cultural**

The psychological issues associated with nimbleness and growth-mindedness challenge long-term teachers and administrators in the areas of cultural and linguistic responsiveness and self-efficacy when confronting new challenges as reflective educational practitioners. And, certainly, in living the principles, we have to commit to the importance of international-mindedness attributes in the entire community to become a success-for-all system rather than a sifting and sorting system. Socio-culturally, a stance of equity demands an examination of the expectations and needs of growing cultural groups within the community as well as confronting the stereotypes that can be deeply held.

With these frameworks as a backdrop to this project, we needed to engage in open dialogue with a genuine inquiry stance. As we learned from one another and grew as a community of learners within this context, our co-construction of what CLRP means would be a critical step forward in creating equitable learning opportunities for our increasingly diverse student body.

## **Improvement Goal**

The goal of the participatory action research (PAR) was to build the capacity of the teachers to improve the cognitive and affective learning of students who are culturally and



linguistically diverse. The goal demanded attention to conditions that support teachers in becoming reflective practitioners and adaptive experts with growing knowledge, skill and efficacy in responding to their students as well as becoming teacher-leaders for a cohesive, comprehensive vision of what this looks like. Ultimately, the PAR focus encouraged us to operationalize the school vision of providing “the best teaching and learning so that all can achieve more than they believe they can”.

The ever-growing diversity of our student body as well as the structures that have been put in place (e.g. the current structure of the SEAL program which isolates the beginning ELL learners for much of the day) resulted initially in decreasing efficacy, which had not fully been addressed with appropriate support at the outset of the PAR. Therefore, it was critical to this inquiry that we explore the needs of participating teachers in deepening their understanding and implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) (which includes an affective component in building communities of learners in the classroom) over the course of the PAR cycles of inquiry.

In doing so, the original co-practitioner research (CPR) team planned an initial focus group activity with heads of department in the middle school to introduce and explore the elements of cultural and linguistically responsive practice. Then, I introduced teachers to the research project itself in order to gain the consent of participating teachers while the CRP team planned to provide leadership, learning, and coaching to support teacher learning and growth in evolving cycles of inquiry. The primary aim of the project was supporting new practices for teachers to support the implementation of the school vision for the culturally and linguistically diverse student body. Table 2 highlights the expected drivers for the project and the anticipated results.

Table 2

*Driver Diagram: Drivers and Anticipated Results in Project*

Drivers	Anticipated Results
Commitment to and implementation of improved teacher practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring self as teacher, cultural being</li> <li>• Increasing academic discourse within a PLC to build a stronger learning community of reflective practitioners</li> <li>• Understanding and skill in using culturally and linguistically responsive practices</li> </ul>
School and community climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing cultural understanding for both teachers and students</li> <li>• Building quality trusting relationships to support academic discourse and risk-taking</li> </ul>
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing affective and cognitive learning for both teachers and students</li> </ul>
Organizational Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources including relationships, openness to change, commitment to growth and efficacy</li> <li>• Structural resources including collaboration time</li> <li>• Teaching &amp; learning resources including culturally and linguistically responsive materials</li> </ul>
Researcher and Co-Practitioner Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth as learners and leaders</li> <li>• Commitment to community and participants</li> </ul>

## **Purpose and Theory of Action**

The purpose of the in-depth participatory action research (PAR) project was to discover the ways in which I could best support teachers in the development of culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) and support other administrators to live the vision of the school as providing “the best teaching and learning so that all can achieve more than they believe they can”. I engaged the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) team, five participating co-teachers, in two action research cycles to explore how we could collaboratively build their capacity as international school teachers and teacher-leaders to create and sustain conditions that would improve the affective and cognitive learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Evidence related to the focus of practice indicated a pressing need to address the conditions for teacher learning and action that, in turn affected, student learning at Hayward. The theory of action was: If we can enact a participatory action research (PAR) project that involves teachers closest to the focus of practice and engage them deeply in examining culturally and linguistically responsive practice in order to enact and sustain teacher learning that supports improved practice, then we can model a process that is scalable to other teachers and build a set of policies and practices for full implementation of CLRP.

## **PAR Research Questions**

In this section, I present the overarching research question that guided the study and the actionable questions on which I collected and analyzed evidence and discuss my research identity.

The overarching research question: How can we build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse?

- To what extent do the middle school Sheltered English as an Additional Language (SEAL) understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice?
  - How effectively do teachers build a community of learners within classrooms that are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)?
  - How effectively do teachers use research-based practices to teach students who are CLD?
- To what extent have the CPR team grown in their understanding and leadership of culturally and linguistically diverse populations and practices.
- How effectively do I use my leadership action space to support this learning work?

With these research questions guiding the participatory action research (PAR), I provide an overview of my identity as a researcher – understanding that this identity played a role in my approach.

### **Research Identity**

My knowledge and self-identity of and with research has been framed primarily through the work I did in my Master's program in organizational communication. Throughout that experience, I was involved in significant investigations in both qualitative and quantitative research. I do not believe I am someone who sees objective reality in the world. As a result, while I found quantitative research to be a window through which to gain a more objective view of a landscape, I always found it to be more of a gateway into identifying or prioritizing problems to be solved. And, because problems are largely contextual, I believe that knowledge for problem-solving has to be co-constructed through more qualitative measures. Similar to what Bryk, Gomez, Grunow and LeMahieu (2015) point out when they indicate the importance of asking: "What works, for whom, and under what set of conditions?" (p. 13).

As a result, I identify quite deeply with Labaree's (2003) statement that "research claims in education tend to be mushy, highly contingent, and heavily qualified, and the focus is frequently more on description and interpretation than on causation" (p. 14). In fact, much of the tenor of this particular article was the reason I chose to do my original graduate work outside the field of education. Since the day I set foot inside my first classroom as a teacher, I understood the complexity of the educational landscape. However, I have felt tension about our use of that complexity as an excuse for not utilizing more of the 'hard' science of systems and teaching and learning to help us simplify some of that complexity. This might lead us to more easily prioritize the most value-added places to dig deeper qualitatively for rich and lasting improvement.

Yet, I think digging deeper to construct knowledge of a particular reality is only as valuable as our intent to actually do something with that knowledge – accurate and insightful descriptions of the context or the problem or the current ways of dealing with it are not enough. Therefore, design thinking, which asks us to consider the users as a key component of problem-solving research as well as to embed loops of feedback and iteration adds a great deal of utility and value to educational research. It is the bridge between the world of the researcher and the world of the practitioner. As Labaree (2003) points out, "[e]ducation only starts to become understandable when it is approached from multiple perspectives" (p. 15). But, it also adds layers of complexity to the learning work. I felt fortunate at this point in my career to be able to bring to this next step as a researcher some of the traits of maturity and years of professional experience and dedication to education. And, in my current position, I am deeply entrenched in professional responsibilities that call for a firmer foothold in the analytical, theoretical and intellectual – areas that are in need of strengthening for those of us that want to truly embrace being a research-practitioner.

As I looked toward further developing my research identity, a tension that I deliberated was how to accomplish this within the constraints of our obligations and systems – including the timeliness necessary to sustain engagement, focus and energy for enhanced educational practice and change. I needed to find a place of less tension about this being, in the words of Labaree (2003), "so much intellectual fiddling while the classroom burns" (p. 18). Yet, I identify with Elmore and McLaughlin's (1988) sentiment of the "steady work" that reform efforts become when they are enacted without truly understanding the contextual problem they are trying to solve. As I have explored this equity issue that is currently a problem of practice at Hayward, all of these tensions played out in the PAR and in my role, which I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **Significance of the FOP**

In this section, I discuss the significance of this focus of practice in the international school sector with particular focus on the significance of practice, policy, and research for the particular context. In Chapter 7, after the conclusion of the PAR project, I elaborate on recommendations for practice, policy and research.

### **Practice**

IB World Schools are, philosophically, meant to hold international-mindedness at the core of what they do. The mission of the IB explicitly states that they "aim to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" ("Mission," n.d., p.1). As a member of the IB World community and, in fact, the global education community, it was incumbent upon us in the PAR project to examine and continue to build our efficacy in practice to achieve this aim: to ground our work in practices that support social-cultural belonging and inclusion and advocate for and use research-based instructional practices aimed at being culturally and linguistically responsive in order to provide quality learning for all. Our ability to ensure that

the project focuses “the best teaching and learning so that all achieve more than they believe they can” makes the project a viable and crucial professional learning experience for the participants. However, as the project progressed and the numbers of ELL students and SEAL teachers increased, we realized just how the complexities among the organization’s vision and structures and the classroom reality played out.

### **Policy**

We intended to use the results to inform policy at our school as well as share with other like schools. Thus, elements of this research may be used to inform independent policies at international schools to support inclusive learning environments and professional learning resources and structures that facilitate high quality learning for all. The areas where this may be particularly applicable are in the areas of policy for inclusion, language learning, leadership for learning, culturally responsive curriculum policies, and professional learning for teachers.

### **Research**

Globalization and the resulting increasing diversity of language learners in international schools is a world-wide phenomenon that has called into question our ability to deliver quality, equitable learning opportunities. The ability to increase efficacy in one context to meeting this challenge was intended to engender and inform further research in other contexts as international schools continue to evolve with the changing world. Considerations of how the project could inform the practice community were the main focus in constructing the PAR design.

### **Participatory Action Research Design Overview and Limitations**

As Stringer (2014) indicates, ‘action research seeks to engage the complex dynamics involved in any social context’ (p. 1). But in its complexity, clarity is critical. The specific focus of the participatory action research (PAR) highlights effective teacher understanding

and practice for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students at Hayward. To begin the action research, a group of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) worked together as a professional learning community in conjunction with the teacher-practitioners to enact focus group protocols and activities to explore initial understanding and practice in order to more specifically define the problem. As Spillane and Miele (2007) indicated, “. . . data do not define problems; people do!” (as cited in Spillane, 2013, p. 38). As the project developed, the CPR group became the five co-teachers, and they defined their problems of practice through iterative evidence which engendered significant change in their planning and teaching practices.

With the problem defined, the CPR team continued to iterate co-created cycles of professional learning and dialogue to support increased understanding and implementation of CLRP. The five teachers provided the backbone of the evidence for fully understanding what was important in teacher understanding, planning and implementation of CLRP. The researcher conducted both planning meeting and classroom observations and follow-up interviews with the volunteer participants to further explore the implementation of CLRP.

The iterative cycles of action research with teachers and teacher-leaders resulted in a rich description of understandings and skills for improving the learning of our diverse learners by supporting the learning and practice of our teachers. As a result, these questions continued to resonate: What patterns do we observe? What are the most valuable assets? What are the most serious challenges? Through data analysis, a thoughtful determination of the most value-added actions emerged. Through planning and implementing two PAR cycles and attending to data collection on their effects, we continued to refine and iterate our actions to support data-driven decisions for professional learning and practice.

The project was a contextually-driven participatory action research project. As such, the project was limited to supporting increasing understanding about what works for whom



and under what conditions at Hayward International School or a similar school. Further, the initial focus on the middle school Sheltered EAL (SEAL) teachers may affect the scalability of some of the results within departments with less understanding of the literacy demands of their discipline. Other schools may have other systems for setting up ELL practices and schedules, and, therefore, the PAR project may not be as applicable to their situations; however, we expected the planning and acting for learning in the co-teacher model to inform other teachers and schools. A more extensive discussion of the results and limitations is in Chapter 7.

### **Chapter Summary**

Increasing cultural diversity and numbers of language learners is an on-going challenge and opportunity for international schools. The resulting growth of the culturally and linguistically diverse population within the school provides an important foundation from which we examined our context and its assets and challenges to ensuring our teachers are supported in providing quality, equitable learning for all learners. Various data sources indicated that we need to confront our challenges with a growth-oriented attitude.

However, increasing diversity within the school is an asset for our global teachers and learners. In the words of Gutiérrez (2016), we need positive steps toward a mindset which illustrates that, “Diversity here is not a *deficit*, but an *essential resource* . . .” (p. 191) that supports our sustainability as a high quality educational choice for all students and families and a rich teaching environment for our teachers. The PAR allowed us to enter a positive phase of continuous improvement which can support our ability to contribute to the achievement of the IBO mission and, indeed, to the achievement of our own vision to “provide the best teaching and learning so all achieve more than they believe they can”.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the theoretical, normative and empirical research surrounding the focus of practice including second language acquisition,

bilingualism in international schools including best practice in language learning, school conditions that foster language learning and teacher professional learning. Chapter 3 details the context of this action research project, including a description of the people and place while Chapter 4 outlines the research design as well as data collection and analysis methodology. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the two cycles of inquiry (PAR Cycle One: Fall 2017 and PAR Cycle Two: Spring and Fall 2018). Chapter 7 provides a discussion of key claims and a theory in action that emerged from the study. Because the entire project occurred within the context of ongoing work in a school environment, the work that is the focus of the inquiry continues beyond the cycles of inquiry that are the subject of this dissertation. The evidence from the cycles continues to inform teachers and administrators at the school as we address the assets and challenges detailed within the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Clearly, students in IB international schools such as Hayward, with students from 60 passport countries speaking a range of 47 languages, bring a set of diverse cultural and language assets. However, the benefits of such diversity do bring challenges to schools and their teachers and leaders (Alton-Lee, 2003; Carder, 2012; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Kusuma-Powell, 2004; Pearce, 2013; Scanlon & Lopez, 2012). For example, Carder (2012) finds that the intention of serving Second Language Learners (SLL) does not meet the practice, and “in too many international schools, there are still too many SLLs who are left to sink or swim; there are well-qualified ESL teachers who are marginalized and not empowered...” (p. 86).

Culturally and linguistically diverse students present a dilemma for international school settings. While we subscribe to valuing intercultural education, and that should include celebrating multilingual and multicultural students as a significant asset, we find the students who come to us not speaking English, the dominant or only language of instruction, a significant challenge to our school settings (Pearce, 2013). The challenge of equitably serving a myriad of language learners combined with the challenges of being responsive to a culturally diverse student body both played a role in this action research project. The purpose of this chapter is to situate the PAR research project in the theoretical and research narratives that can inform and provide a lens through which to understand and examine the specific context and practices this project sits in.

I begin the review with a discussion of the theoretical foundations of second language acquisition including the centrality of language for all learning. I then move to a discussion on bilingualism/multilingualism in international schools including what the IB and the Common Core bring to the table for consideration. Then, I examine the literature surrounding

effective practice in support of language learning and the school conditions that support effective learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Through this review, I became clearer that the school conditions for effective language learning in international schools such as Hayward must include attention to language learning across disciplines or discipline-based literacy. All teachers need to ground their practices literacy-based knowledge, understanding, and research-based practices if they are to be effective teachers of language (Carder, 2012; Janson, 2008; Mulazzi & Nordmeyer, 2011; Zwiers, 2006).

In further exploring the school conditions that support culturally and linguistically responsive practice, attention to culturally responsive pedagogy requires not a list of pedagogical practices but actually a paradigm shift with high expectations for teachers as inclusive reflective practitioners (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2012). Then we understand how professional learning can best support teachers in becoming and sustaining their roles as reflective practitioners for diverse populations.

What became striking as I read the literature was the emphasis on the role of context and the critical importance of committed, reflective teacher practice combined with a coherent, systemic approach steeped in values. While there seems to be strong normative language developing around what should be done, I note less research about how practitioners explore themselves and their practices or how reflective practitioners understand and sustain engagement in activities that the literature suggests as best practice. In particular, scant literature examines these areas in-depth in the international school setting.

### **Language Acquisition: Theoretical Foundations**

Research in language acquisition has long forwarded that benefits of additive bilingualism (acquiring English as an additional language while maintaining one's native language) make it path of choice for English language learners or second language learning

(Collier & Thomas, 1999; Cummins, 1980; Cummins, 1981; Rolstad, Mohoney, & Glass, 2005). The research findings have formed the basis of the theoretical principles that have been posited in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that include important distinctions between phases of language acquisition, comprehensible input and the affective filter. In addition, language-based theory and socio-cultural theory contribute important frames in helping us think about the complexities of language acquisition.

The discourse and research in second language acquisition (SLA) is dominated by the scholarly work of Cummins, Krashen and Halliday, who have provided the foundational principles on which many of the approaches to second language learning in schools have been based. The researchers make a distinction between social language proficiency, referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS and academic language proficiency, referred to as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP (Cummins, 1980).

### **Foundational Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition**

Cummins (1980), a Canadian researcher and theorist, underscores the difference between BICS and CALP and further notes the importance of educational practitioners recognizing these as two distinct stages of language acquisition. He contends that to do otherwise can place language learners at a distinct academic disadvantage. That is: when a language learner appears to be proficient in the language because they can engage in fluent face-to-face, social conversation (BICS) it is often assumed they are also automatically able to handle the context-reduced and cognitively demanding academic tasks of school (CALP). Yet, while language learners may exhibit fluent BICS within two years, it takes five to seven years of language learning to achieve a level of proficiency in CALP equivalent to English mother-tongue peers (Cummins, 1981).

Cummins (1980) added to the foundational knowledge of SLA through positing the common underlying proficiency (CUP) model of bilingual education whereby experience in

one's first language (L1) in conjunction with experience in a second language (L2) complement one another and, in fact, support the development of both languages. A review of empirical studies after 1985 by Rolstad et al. (2005), provided overwhelming support for bilingual education including encouraging the use of mother-tongue to support student academic achievement in English. This bolsters support for sociocultural factors that have been shown to affect L2 acquisition, namely attitude toward individual and cultural identity. Additive bilingual approaches that support pride in mother-tongue and culture positively impact not only language acquisition, but also personal growth and confidence. This in contrast to "subtractive bilingualism" whereby no such support for mother-tongue and culture exists and individuals and/or systems attempt to replace L1 with L2.

The more recent emphasis on translanguaging -- as a term used to describe the pedagogical approach to language learning in which teachers value and use students' entire range of linguistic knowledge to support learning -- draws on models of bilingualism. In implementing translanguaging, teachers work from an asset framework focused on helping students make connections between mother-tongue language and culture and new language and content learning including the use of mother-tongue to support content comprehension for clarification or elaboration (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Rojas, 2015).

Thus, the research underscores the need for international schools to subscribe to the model of additive bilingualism that requires teachers to know and respect their learners as culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. Certainly, part of the PAR project's exploration of teacher knowledge and practice in supporting language learners examines what they know about their students, how they come to know it and how they use that knowledge to support learning within a community of learners. Krashen (1994), through hypotheses based in applied linguistics, adds to our understanding of the learning conditions that support emerging bilingualism.

## **Language Acquisition, Comprehensible Input and Affective Filter**

Krashen's (1983) principle of comprehensible input adds to the understanding of second language acquisition. Krashen's theory is based on empirical research in the field of applied linguistics. He forwards five hypotheses that he summarizes in a single claim: "People acquire second languages when they obtain comprehensible input and when their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in" (Krashen, 1983, p. 62). As this claim indicates, the hypotheses that have had the most impact on strategies for language acquisition include the input hypothesis (comprehensible input) and the affective filter hypothesis. These, in addition to his acquisition-learning hypothesis that forwards the premise that language acquisition trumps language learning provides a host of implications for supporting language learners. Krashen's hypotheses parallel Vygotsky's zones of proximal development theory in which, as with all new learning, the persons learning a language need appropriately scaffolded doses of input and practice so as to not overwhelm them and cause anxiety (Slavin, 1997). However, language acquisition has some additional cautions since the most basic tool of all learning is language.

According to Krashen (1983), *language acquisition* is the natural, subconscious acquiring of a language through using it for communicative purposes; this is superior to *language learning* which is defined as the formal and explicit learning of rules and grammar of a language. It is easy to recognize that language acquisition is the way we become fluent in our first language (L1). However, traditional approaches to L2 acquisition have often incorporated a significant number of language learning approaches in which students were schooled in the rules and then practiced the rules through the language. Krashen urges teachers of language to value approaches that forward communicative competency or meaning making over language learning or correctness.

Another of Krashen's hypothesis with far reaching implications for practice in language acquisition is input theory. Most often referred to as "comprehensible input", this hypothesis forwards  $i + 1$  is the best input for learning with the "i" as comprehensible (e.g., the message is scaffolded in such a way that the learner can understand the message) and the "+1" as the new language structures the message contains. In other words, language learners should learn underlying structures of a language by first understanding the meaning of the message and then using other learning resources (for example, knowledge of L1, background knowledge, contextual knowledge, visuals, etc.) to construct and internalize knowledge of the language structures.

He further indicates that it is not necessary for the structures to be deliberately sequenced, rather, the focus should remain on genuine communication with subsequent inquiry into the why and how the language works. This hypothesis heavily influenced the development of classroom strategies for language learners. For example, the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is an instructional model that contains eight specific components such as building background knowledge, comprehensible input and interaction (meaning-making through communication) that are directly related to this hypothesis (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2017). There have been, however, empirical studies (see Payne, 2011) that have called into question the practical application of this hypothesis in terms of the time intensiveness required for teachers to provide "just right" comprehensible input for a community of diverse learners in a classroom.

A third part of Krashen's language frame is the affective hypothesis, which draws on a host of empirical research that supports the affective or attitudinal factors that impact language acquisition, namely anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. Consideration of affective factors have given rise to a great deal of research in how social and emotional learning impacts academic achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Phakiti, Hirsch, & Woodrow,



2013; Rodriguez, Jones, Pang, & Park, 2004). Affective factors are also part of the host of current research investigating the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), which will be discussed later.

### **Language-Based Theory**

Halliday (1993) contributes a language-based theory of learning to the literature on second language learners: “[w]hen children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather they are learning the foundation of learning itself” (p. 93). Language learning intertwines with other experiential and the interpersonal parts of learning and that complexity fully constitutes meaning-making or learning and is a form of praxis: “all learning – is at once both action and reflection” (Halliday, 1993, p. 101).

This connects not only to Krashen’s language acquisition hypothesis but also to van Lier and Walqui’s (2012) discussion of language as action or as an expression of agency which they define as “the ability to act, which is facilitated or debilitated by a range of individual and social factors, including sociocultural, historical, economic and political ones” (p. 4). As language becomes a more significant and underlying area of focus for all learning (one such sign is the emphasis on language in the Common Core State Standards across disciplines) perhaps it will turn the tide from, as Galguera (2011) states, “preparing teachers for a particular type of student (English learners – which often results in a deficit perspective, [to preparing] teachers capable of effecting specific learning outcomes, namely, furthering students’ proficiency in using language for academic purposes” (p. 86).

### **Socio-Cultural Theory**

A recent addition to perspectives on second language acquisition include Razfar, Khisty and Chval’s (2011) assertion that sociocultural theory brings important lenses to (SLA). Through an analysis of practices used by an effective teacher in a grade five math classroom, they discuss how success with diverse language learners (as measured by

standardized scores and the student work of two focal students) reflects a socio-cultural perspective that provides further insight into second language learning. In particular, in these classrooms, there is an emphasis on the social organization as a community of learners, with each learner as an active agent in his or her learning and an emphasis on discourse and interaction focused on cross-disciplinary problem-solving and multiple, quality mediation tools (e.g., repositioning the students as experts, questioning, using multiple language modalities such as talking, writing, etc. to mediate thinking and learning). Thus, socio-cultural theory enriches SLA in providing a broader theoretical umbrella encompassing the ways language learners can be supported in their overall learning across the curriculum. However, as Razfar et al. (2011) caution, all this rests on an assumption that teachers believe “ELL students are capable of such advanced work, of self-agency, of working collectively — in conjunction and with the guidance of a teacher who positions them accordingly” (p. 215).

Thus, the foundations of the PAR project are rooted in both second language acquisition and socio-cultural theories from which effective practices that support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse learners grow. Many specific actionable practices and models (such as the SIOP model discussed above) developed from these theories; yet, there is inherent complexity in attending to them in the daily practice of teachers. Further, while the individual practice of teachers planning for and engaging in learning with students remains at the heart of education, individual practitioners and their practice are not, in and of themselves, the answer to a systemic concern. For the purposes of the PAR project, individual practices sit within the larger context of international school programming and leadership.

### **Bilingualism in International Schools**

By their very nature, international schools with diverse student populations should be champions of bi- or multilingualism. Further, for those who are IB schools such as Hayward,

where, as Carder (2013) indicates, “[t]here are no political pressures for assimilation, there is no nation state to assimilate to nor political machinations about provision for immigrants” (p. 88) it could be expected that additive bilingualism would flourish. And there is promise, but challenges remain. In this section, I examine the IB policy and curriculum and how it supports bilingualism, but has key issues in implementation of that policy. Secondly I discuss the ways the Common Core as a set of standards affects our work in supporting bilingualism in international schools.

### **International Baccalaureate Policy and Curriculum: Promise, But Issues**

International Baccalaureate (IB) schools are compelled to support bilingualism or multilingualism by virtue of the principles and mission of the IB as their authorization body. However, despite policy and curricular guidance, several issues crop up at IB schools regarding bi or multilingualism. As the IB states in its Language Policy document, multilingualism is "fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness" (IBO Language Policy, p. 1). As a result of that principle, the IB programme and practices document requires the school to “place importance on language learning, including mother-tongue, host country language and other languages” (Programme Standards and Practices, p. 3).

The IB requires that accredited schools have a language policy that reflects the IB philosophy on languages and their standards and practices require that all students have access to learning a second language beginning at the age of seven; requires students to study a second language (referred to as Language B) throughout their programmes and, in fact, offers both a bilingual Middle Years Programme (MYP) certificate as well as a bilingual diploma in the Diploma Programme (DP) if specific criteria are met. Additionally, the IB promotes mother-tongue development programmes, but does not require them.

However, a significant difficulty arises in the MYP years (Grades 6-10) with students for whom the language of instruction (still primarily English in most international schools) is not their first language or mother tongue or the host language. English Language A (defined as the mother tongue or best language of the student) is a standard course offered in MYP schools; however, for English language learners (ELLs) their Language A might be Japanese or Mandarin or Swedish. Yet, for a school with 40+ mother tongues, it is not feasible to offer all of those languages as a Language A course.

Further complicating the situation is, as Carder (2006) points out, if a school offers English as Language B in the MYP (which Hayward currently does not), the aims, objectives and assessment criteria in the course are not rigorous or complex enough for ELL's to develop the academic language and discourse requirements to be successful in the rest of the programme's courses. At our school, students must access the majority of their academic content and understanding in English.

As a result, even under the umbrella of the IB, most international schools are not well placed to support bilingualism unless students' mother tongues are the languages of the language acquisition or Foreign Language programme (e.g., Spanish or Mandarin, for instance) and that school offers that programme as a Language A in the secondary school. Carder (2002) berates the IB MYP for the lack of guidance and support for bilingualism in international schools, "ESL students should be on the center stage of any international curriculum. Instead they are subjected to a process of 'subtractive bilingualism', i.e. English replacing their mother tongue as their best academic language" (Carder, 2002, p. 40). At best, most schools seek to establish mother-tongue support outside of school hours to ensure students are continuing their literacy learning and supporting other academic learning in their L1. This is the case at Hayward where currently eight mother tongue programs operate under

a “parent-run, school-supported” model. Essentially, parents facilitate the language instruction and the school provides the space for extra classes to happen.

Further, the IB Programme Standards and Practices (2014), in the area of curriculum, seeks to ensure the support of language learning for all by requiring practices that demonstrate all teachers are responsible for supporting the language development of students as well as to differentiate for the diversity of student language needs. However, the school decides how this is interpreted as well as enacted. As a result of system and resource constraints, the approach to EAL in most international schools has been to treat English language learning as a distinct discipline. As cited in Theoharis and O’Toole (2011), de Jong and Harper (2004) indicate, “ESL is often used when diverse languages are spoken at the same school and there are not enough students who speak the home language to offer a bilingual program” (p. 654). Yet, significant issues remain with EAL programs in international schools as they often follow the medical model (pull-out and ‘fix’ them) for a certain portion of their day (Carder, 2013). When this model or philosophy prevails, often no language scaffolding takes place to support learning at any other time during the day, leaving the students submerged (i.e., sink or swim) for much of their day (Crawford, 2004). And, the theoretical literature about the social aspect of learning or Krashen’s hypotheses on comprehensible input and the affective filter does not inform the practice.

### **Concurrent Considerations: Common Core**

With more and more international schools adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or a version through the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core Plus standards, the expectations for all students and language learning become higher. van Lier and Walqui (2012) in examining the common core standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies, concluded that “academic understandings and skills are permeated by language, both in terms of understanding

concepts and accepted subject-specific procedures, and in terms of processes of learning to understand, to share, to consolidate, and to present” (p. 1).

Their discussion connects to Halliday’s assertion on the centrality of language to all learning and language as action and an expression of agency in context and with meaning-making purpose. They wonder, however, whether schools seeking to deeply embed these standards will actually rise to the essential challenge of integrating “language, cognition, and action deeply and coherently” (van Lier & Walqui, p. 7) or whether they will continue to interpret them in a narrow subject-based way – either by choice or due to the complexity of what it asks of teachers in relation to teacher understanding and skill in doing so. As the CCSS have come to the forefront, they have led to a great deal of debate about the knowledge and skills that teachers need. As a result, a whole new area of pedagogical language knowledge for mainstream teachers that reflects “language directly related to disciplinary teaching and learning . . . situated in the particular (and multiple) contexts” (Bunch, 2013, p. 307) has become an area for professional preparation and learning.

Thus, while IB schools could and should be seen as champions of bilingualism, a gap between the IB philosophy and policies and the way schools operationalize them is apparent. The gap is due to a variety of factors including the increasing diversity of mother tongues within the schools, the increasing language expectations as forwarded by standards frameworks and, perhaps most importantly, the understanding and skill of international school teachers to respond effectively.

### **Pedagogy for Language Learning**

The empirical, normative and practice literature surrounding language learning has evolved in the last fifteen years regarding learning programs, structures and practices that are most supportive of language learners. As a burgeoning area of research, multiple studies in this section point to the strong connection of best language learning practices to best teaching

practice. Further, the research supports the overarching importance of discipline-based literacy approaches in which all teachers are teachers of language and all learners are on the language learning continuum.

A review of the empirical literature focused on instructional practices for ELLs by Gersten and Baker (2000) revealed the importance of merging English-language development with content-area teaching to embed language learning in intellectual work. The researchers found a high correlation between promising practices and the knowledge base on effective teaching in general such as pre-teaching vocabulary; frequent, specific feedback, building background knowledge; using visuals; implementing structured cooperative learning strategies and the strategic use of native language (translanguaging). They cautioned against oft-seen unstructured oral language activities that lacked focus and feedback loops and encouraged participation with “minimal cognitive challenge and academic content” (Gersten & Baker, 2000, p. 466).

In the international world, Carder (2012) posited that non-negotiable components of good EAL programs in international schools would include a sheltered program of intensive English instruction, cultural and linguistic awareness training for all staff to support scaffolding in instruction, and a mother tongue program to support further cognitive and academic skills while students are learning English. While the emphasis on mother tongue is well-taken, this description seems to be too loose in terms of the responsibility of all faculty and, again, seems to organize responsibility for certain aspects of learning in silos rather than a holistic approach across the curriculum and school.

More in line with Gersten and Baker (2000), additional evolution in the last decade emphasized how mainstream teachers needed to more deeply acquire pedagogical language knowledge and application. Awareness is no longer sufficient to ensure student engagement with cognitively challenging texts; with the right scaffolding to support the understanding

and creation of such texts, all learners can have access. As such, ELLs “develop language and literacy in and through engagement with the kinds of texts and practices called for by the common standards, rather than as a prerequisite to such engagement” (Bunch, 2013, p. 330). In other words, all content teachers need to acquire the ability to engage students in opportunities that support the development of language and literacy embedded in core content knowledge including vocabulary instruction (specialized and technical) and the grammar of comprehending and producing certain text types and discourse (DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014; Galguera, 2011). Language acquisition is not the focus *per se*, but the focus on language as a significant mediation tool for learning in multiple modalities is critical (Razfar et al., 2011). Academic English and ensuring participation in rich academic discourse is everyone’s responsibility—for all learners.

Further, both normative and empirical research has underscored the need for ELLs to engage in extended oral and written interaction and discourse (beyond narrative) in order to acquire increasingly sophisticated language skills and an understanding of context and its relationship to register (Janzen, 2008; Verplaetse, 2008; Zwiers 2006, 2007). Zwiers (2007) cautions against “linguistic enabling” or accepting answers orally or in writing that do not use the specific academic language that is called for. Students need to be explicitly taught and uncover the academic language and structures in context and then be provided learning engagements that require them to use and extend discourse (reflecting higher order thinking) around important content and conceptual understandings.

Galguera (2011) forwarded that targeting teaching strategies for English learners is too narrow of a scope and the focus should be toward “language use for academic purposes” (p. 85). It could be argued that this shift would enable a shift away from teachers objecting to the “work intensification” due to a specific type of student that Gitlin, Buendia, Crosland and Doumbia (2003) discuss. He suggests through his self-study research that one possible way to



increase teacher understanding of language functions in academic contexts is through the use of ‘participant structures’ which he defines as “explicit, planned interactions that scaffold students’ comprehension and production primarily of oral language” (Galguera, p. 93). The importance of an “abundance” of student interaction within academically challenging content classrooms is further supported by Bunch (2006), Verplaetse (2008) as well as Zwierts (2006). Bunch (2006) and Zwierts (2006) provide empirical evidence from middle school social studies classrooms that structured interactive group tasks in heterogeneous classrooms enabled all students, including those who may have been lacking traditional “academic English” fluency, to successfully engage in challenging academic tasks.

Walqui and Heritage (2012) go a step further and recommend that language or communication skills need to be rooted in context and tied to audience and purpose so students have a wide repertoire of skills. Student understanding in how best to select communicative registers and genres to effectively communicate in specific situations impacts the achievement of purpose. In addition, they offer four other principles of responsive instruction for language learners and give voice to the importance of activating prior knowledge and connect that to responsiveness in choosing the contexts and texts (see Table 3). They also emphasize the importance of a stance of ‘generativity and autonomy’ rooted in a community of learners where in students are invited in, with appropriate scaffolding and consistent assessment for learning, to communities of practice as scientists, mathematicians, writers, etc. (Walqui & Heritage, 2012). The qualitative research carried out by Zwierts (2006) in a middle school social studies class provides a glimpse into the kind of teaching and learning and the evidence of student learning that arises when these principles for effective practice are enacted.

Table 3

*Walqui & Heritage (2012) Principles*

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Principle	Description
Principle 1	“Learning is always based on prior knowledge and experience. ELLs must have equal access to knowledge that is valued in school” (p. 1)
Principle 2	“Language and cognition develop together and progressively. As ideas and relationships become more complex, so does language” (p. 2)
Principle 3	“The goal of learning is to develop the stance of generativity and autonomy. This is accomplished through apprenticeship in which the learner is invited to become a member of a community of practice” (p. 3).
Principle 4	“The goal of language use is to make it contextually appropriate; students need to be competent navigators within a range of different registers” (p. 4).
Principle 5	“Assessment is integrated into the process of teaching and learning. Assessment-elicited information is used by both teachers and students to consistently keep learning moving forward” (p. 5).

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The questions then become: What conditions need to be present in school to support learning for ELLs that research and practice tells us is best? How do we ensure that mainstream, content-area teachers have the understanding and skill required? There is little doubt that the globalized world and resulting diversity within any school has increased the complexity of effective teaching. As is clear, however, increasing pedagogical knowledge and skill for all teachers to embed learning about language and through language in the intellectual work of all disciplines while necessary is exceedingly complex for classroom use and for school-level support. The next section on the school conditions that support language learning includes a section on the value of looking at the culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogical principles and direction to more fully address the larger concern of supporting the needs of all diverse learners, since to a large degree, every secondary student in an international school is or has been a second language learner.

### **School Conditions That Support English Language Learning**

Beyond the IB policies and practices, the increasing linguistic demands new standards frameworks posit for teaching and learning and pedagogical practices that support language acquisition in the classroom, broader philosophical conditions in schools must foster mindsets to support their effective implementation. Philosophical stances on inclusion, on the shared responsibility of reflective practice in the area of cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and on leadership that establishes and sustains the vision all play roles in the important school conditions for language learners to flourish.

### **Inclusion and Leadership**

Inclusion, or the “valuing of diversity within the human community (in order to) realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging” is a foundational need to support equitable, high quality learning (Kunc, 1992, pp. 38-39). Two empirical studies on schools that have been successful in ensuring excellent education for

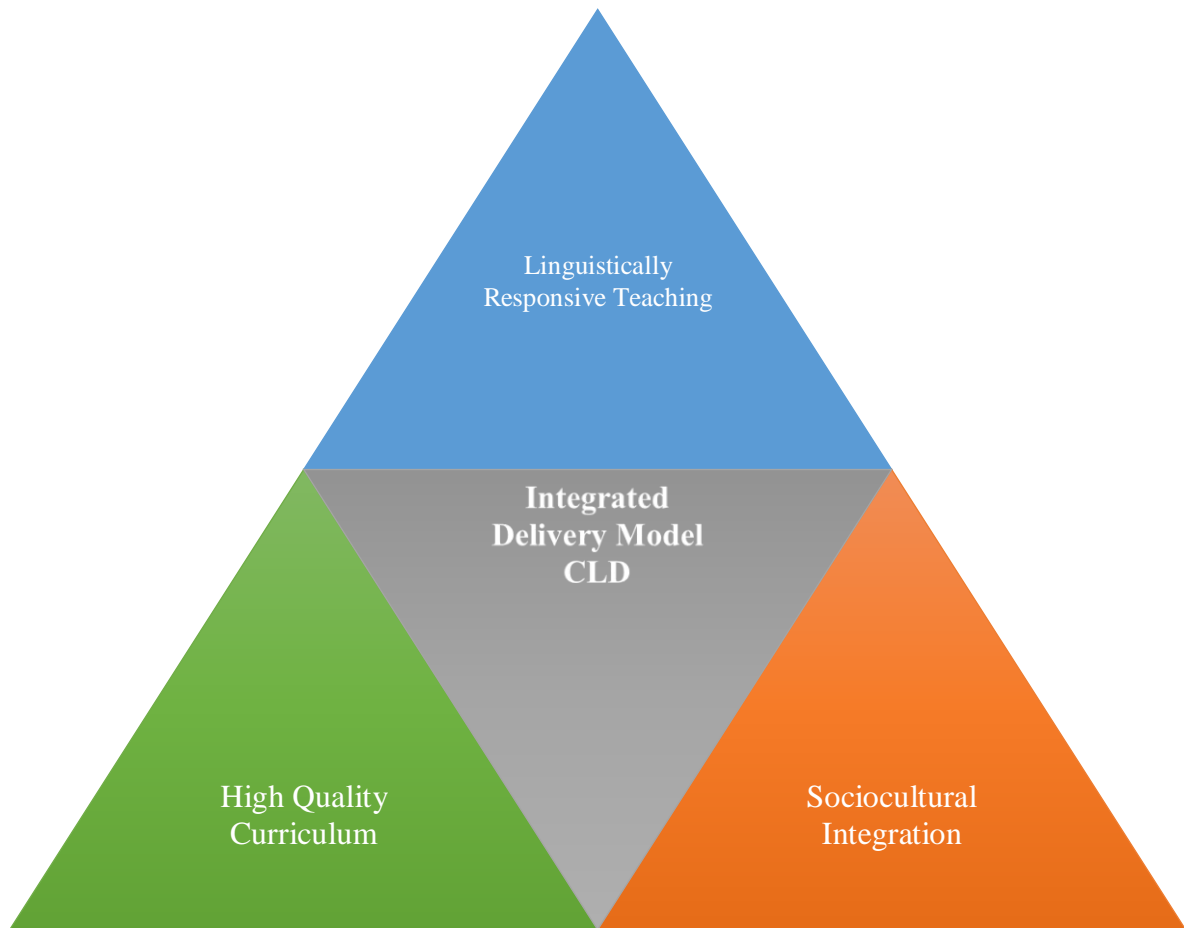
ELL's or culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLD) have found inclusion at the core of their success (Scanlon & Lopez, 2012; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

Theoharis and O'Toole (2011) examined case studies of two effective elementary schools – both of which saw increased student achievement across the student body with particular success for ELLs. While the schools employed different approaches with one school employing a co-teaching model with classroom teachers collaborating inclusively with ELL teachers and one preparing their classroom teachers to take sole responsibility for inclusive instruction, their findings emphasized the importance of school leaders. In particular, “Principals who view language as a resource . . . a relevant asset that contributes not only to their (ELLs) learning but also to the classroom in general” (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p. 650). These distinct case studies underscored collaborative inclusion across the school community: staff, administration and parents.

Scanlan and Lopez (2012) presented a review of 79 empirical studies published between 2000-2010 to answer the question of how school leaders can effectively create an integrated delivery model that effectively serves their culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. In their review, they conclude that a tripartite model emphasizing linguistic responsive teaching to promote language proficiency, access to high quality curriculum, and sociocultural integration – for every student (see Figure 4).

As has been previously discussed and as Scanlon and Lopez (2012) emphasize, this model demands “fostering the skills of *all* teachers to help bilingual learners simultaneously develop content knowledge as well as language skills” (p. 599). A finding echoed by Janzen (2008) and Walqui and Heritage (2012).

Unfortunately, a host of research that suggests these conditions are not what culturally and linguistically diverse students encounter. Multiple studies demonstrate the prevalence of tracking and a deficit discourse that dominate actual structures and practices for ELLs



*Note.* An illustration of an integrated delivery model.

*Figure 4.* Tripartite model.

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(Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002). And, as Motti-Stefanidi, Masten and Asendorpf (2015) found, immigrant students at the Middle School level were at higher risk for lower school engagement. They surmised that issues with academic achievement may lead to this disengagement.

Gitlin et al. (2003) found in a middle school in the U.S. that “welcoming and unwelcoming” structures and behaviors existed simultaneously. For example, while faculty expressed support for diversity, they also vehemently objected to the “work intensification” they perceived (Gitlin et al., 2003, p. 114). While the predominately white community established a “Reaching Out Committee” aimed at helping students from various cultural backgrounds interact, their activities often reduced cultural groups to simple stereotypes (e.g., passing out fortune cookies at Chinese New Year) and their discourse expressed concern that the academic standards of the school would drop and “its privileged position will erode” (Gitlin et al., 2003, p. 117).

These types of welcoming-unwelcoming behaviors are indicative of behaviors and discourse in many international schools. Dr. Virginia Rojas, an ASCD faculty member and long an advocate for inclusionary ELL practice, when asked recently to discuss the value of cultural and linguistic diversity with an international school parent group, indicated:

I prefer not to speak with parents who are not welcoming of international students in an international school setting. My experience is that no matter how much research or how many examples I provide, parents who are afraid that English learners will lower the standards of a school find it difficult to reflect upon their beliefs and opinions. (personal communication, February 24, 2017).

The literature on culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy is useful in thinking about how to address these recurring attitudes and issues (Delpit, 1998; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Paris, 2012; Sleeter, 2012).

Furthermore, Gleeson and Davison (2016) found through a multiple case study of subject teachers that teachers had a general lack of awareness that there was much to learn

about teaching ELLs and ELL specific approaches. In general, the teachers were not at a dissonance level where they thought they needed to change their practice. They concluded, “Teachers need to become aware of a disconnection between their beliefs, knowledge and practice before they are disposed to engage in new learning” (Gleeson & Davison, 2016, p. 560).

Community inclusionary practices stem from beliefs and an understanding of how to put those beliefs into action by creating structures and supporting practices that reflect a true value for diversity. Leadership to establish and sustain a vision to this end is an important element in creating these school conditions. However, as part of that vision, we need more than linguistically responsive understanding and practice, we need culturally responsive practice as well to embrace and support a model of additive bilingualism in our international schools for our language learners.

### **Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Pedagogy: Definitions and Descriptions**

To fully support language learners, the broader area of culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy is critical because it offers a significant glimpse into the kind of practitioners and practice that embrace diversity as an asset, additive bilingualism, and respectful inclusion. While most of the work on culturally relevant pedagogy/teaching has been conducted in the US and focuses on African-American and Latino learners, it is relevant in the PAR project because of the emphasis on diverse learners and the type of reflective practitioner needed in international schools for our language learners to flourish. In this section, I focus on two frames in particular, which are overlapping in content and pedagogical advice: culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 2014) and culturally relevant teaching (Gay, 2013).

Ladson-Billings (1995a) engaged in a multi-phase, qualitative study of eight exemplary (identified through a process of community nomination) teachers of African-

American students to define and propose the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Her study examined three components: academic success, cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness – or the opportunity and skill to “recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 476). However, while all of the teachers provided learning opportunities that included these components, they did so varying ways and in varying degrees, leading Ladson-Billings (1995a) to ask: “What theoretical perspective(s) held them together and allowed them to meet the criteria of culturally relevant teaching” (p. 478)? Through the analysis of the interviews, classroom observations and videotaped segments of their teaching, Ladson-Billings (1995a) posited three propositions in order to go beyond mere strategies and identify the philosophical underpinnings of teachers who successfully practice culturally relevant pedagogy for diverse learners: conceptions about self and others; the value of relationships, and teacher conceptions of content and curriculum.

First, the teachers held common conceptions about themselves and others. The teachers in the study deeply believed that all students were capable of working at a high intellectual level and demanded excellence of them. They saw themselves as constantly evolving as artful practitioners to ensure student success and learning. And they immersed themselves and their students proudly in the community. Second, their practices revolved around building a community of learners in the classroom through “equitable and reciprocal” relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 460). Each individual was valued for the strengths and areas of expertise they brought to the community (and were expected to bring) and everyone was expected to collaborate and take responsibility for self and the others. CRP is “committed to collective, not merely individual empowerment” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 160).



Finally, the third proposition focused on the teachers' conceptions of knowledge and ways they thought about curriculum, content and assessment. "Knowledge was about doing" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 481). It was constructed, viewed critically, appropriately scaffolded and then assessed in multifaceted ways. Ladson-Billings (2014) sums up CRP by saying, "The secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy: the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture" (p. 77). In a published interview, she further indicates the criticality of teachers knowing themselves as cultural beings in order to understand that "the kinds of decisions they make, the way they think, the way they see the world, is culturally mediated" (Willis & Lewis, 1998, p. 63). In doing so, teachers can begin to recognize the centrality of culture and more deeply and authentically engage the cultures of the classroom to explore perspectives.

Gay (2013) uses the term culturally relevant teaching which she defines as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). She indicates that her concept of CRT has evolved over time to "include both substantive and process dimensions, as well as acquiring cultural competence and using cultural resources to facilitate better teaching and learning . . .(but) now the central focus is teaching" (Gay, 2013, p. 51). CRT includes a significant intersection with Ladson-Billings' work in the development of caring learning communities within the classroom.

The two frameworks are similar and complementary; however, Gay's work does not delve as forcefully into the important area of critical consciousness. Though her later writings do indicate that "As part of their culturally responsive teaching, teachers and their students should critique teaching resources and strategies, and compensate for inadequacies when necessary" (Gay, 2013, p. 59), she stops short of Ladson-Billings' (1995b) assertion that challenging the status quo through the "critique (of) cultural norms, values, mores, and

institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (p. 160) is a critical component of cultural responsiveness in education. Later work by Dover (2013) forwarded the term Culturally Responsive Education (CPE) as a stance from which to teach for social justice that utilizes the tenets of CRP whilst also engaging students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies.

Paris (2012) adds to the dialogue when he suggests that the term “responsive” should be replaced with “sustaining” indicating that “like the term ‘tolerance’ in multicultural education and training, neither term goes far enough” (p. 95). Rather, culturally sustaining pedagogies require educators to “support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (Paris, 2012, p. 95), a suggestion endorsed by Ladson-Billings (2014) in *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the Remix*.

Culturally relevant pedagogy has received criticism both because of the ease with which it is simplified and, as a result, made irrelevant, as well as because of the lack of empirical research that directly connects its effectiveness to student achievement. Sleeter (2012) outlines four distinct ways that CRP is understood in oversimplified ways: cultural celebration, trivialization, essentializing and substituting. When CRP is understood as cultural celebration, it separates it from academic learning and achievement – one of the critical outcomes that it seeks. An example of this is the practice in international schools of “International Day” or “International Fiesta Week”, wherein we celebrate cultures through the stereotypical “food, flags and fashion.” Essentializing culture makes damaging assumptions about static characteristics of particular ethnic groups rather than understanding culture and cultures to be dynamic and diverse. As Paris (2012) indicates, culturally sustaining pedagogy needs to sustain languages and cultures “in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used by contemporary young people” (p. 95). Substituting

cultural analysis for political analysis denies the importance of explicit sociopolitical consciousness or directly confronting inequity.

Finally, when CRP is trivialized, it “involves reducing it to steps to follow rather than understanding it as a paradigm” from which to operate (Sleeter, 2012, p. 569). This is particularly critical for international teachers who may find themselves working with students from dozens of different cultural groups. It simply cannot be reduced to a list of ten best-practice strategies to employ in all situations with all students. While Sleeter (2012) definitively calls for increasing research in documenting the rich implementation of CRP and its connection to student achievement and learning, she also emphasizes the importance of cultural context to CRP. “Because of the centrality of context to culturally responsive pedagogy, researchers cannot skip over the task of grounding what it means in the context being studied” (Sleeter, 2012, p. 576).

This is similar to Delpit’s (1988) response when asked to name what makes a good teacher. “There are different attitudes in different culture groups about which characteristics makes for a good teacher. Thus, it is impossible to create a model for the good teacher without taking issues of culture and community context into account” (Delpit, 1998, p. 291). Gay (2013) echoed this when she was asked to identify specific classroom practices for teaching cultural diversity. “How could I recommend practices that would somehow be appropriate for ‘all’ classrooms yet adhere to one of the core tenets of culturally responsive teaching, namely to respect and respond to the particular diversities in each classroom?” (Gay, 2013, p. 63).

The contextual factors of CRP and ‘good teaching’ are incredibly complex in an international school setting that may be serving 40+ cultural groups. Certainly, we can require certain observable strategies in every classroom, but we cannot force a change in belief systems or operating paradigm(s). Yet, it would seem that only a teacher who changes

his or her paradigm(s) can be considered a culturally responsive and reflective practitioner – a.k.a. a “good teacher” in a culturally diverse international setting. In a 1998 interview, in response to an often-asked question about CRP simply being ‘good teaching’, Ladson-Billings retorts: “If it’s just good teaching, why are we having such difficulty making it happen” (p. 64)? I would argue that teachers have to have a significant paradigm shift to fully implement CRP instead of replicating ‘what works’. Rather, they need to participate in creating CRP for each diverse group of students – a resource and reflection heavy task.

### **Empirical Research on CRP with Language Learners**

While the work on CRP calls on teachers to know and respond in a variety of ways to their culturally diverse learners, including respect for and inclusion of cultural perspectives in an authentic and meaningful way, there have not been a large number of empirical studies that have directly shown a connection between this approach and academic achievement.

Aronson and Laughter (2016), partially in response to Sleeter’s (2012) appeal for research connecting CRP – or Culturally Relevant Education (CRE) as they defined it – to achievement, conducted an exhaustive literature review of studies in order to harness what has been done. They reviewed over 40 studies from a variety of disciplines that related dimensions of culturally relevant education to student outcomes. Many of the studies were, as Sleeter (2012) indicated, confined to one cultural group, certain disciplines, or small-scale case studies. The concentration on a single cultural group is problematic and connects to the contextual limitation of CRP discussed above.

In the Aronson and Laughter (2016) meta-analysis of the literature on CLRP/CRP, two studies connected CRE to ELL student achievement as shown through test scores (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). However, more significant were the numerous connections that were made to affective attributes known to impact student learning such student motivation (Wortham & Contreras, 2002), student interest (Feger,

2006), and self-efficacy, or students' perceptions of themselves as capable learners (López 2010; Souryasack & Lee, 2007).

Byrd (2016) brought a wider range of student voices from across the US into the conversation through the use of a survey of 315 secondary students from across the US with a balance of White, Latino, African American and Asian students. In her findings, Byrd (2016), confirmed support for the hypothesis that constructivist teaching approaches and promotion of cultural competence were positively associated with academic outcomes as measured by grades. She surmises that it was, perhaps, because they were also associated with greater interest or engagement with school and feelings of belonging.

The majority of studies that have been conducted to illuminate the successes of culturally responsive pedagogy or culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy do so in a tightly-focused context. For example, Feger (2006) conducted a narrative case study within her own classroom; Duncan-Andrade (2007) focused on effective teachers in Los Angeles urban schools; Irizarry and Antrop-Gonzalez (2007) focused on successful teachers and Puerto Rican students in urban Chicago; Lopez (2010) on Hispanic students; and Wortham and Contreras (2002) focused on one classroom, one teacher and Latino students in New England.

We can, however, even with the disparate contexts cited above, infer patterns from the studies. One of the most striking findings in all studies is the personal/professional stance of the teachers themselves. Teaching was not a job, it was, “who I am, not what I do” (Duncan-Andrade, 2007, p. 628); teaching was a life choice not a professional choice (Irizarry & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2007). The deep investment successful teachers had in the students, community and in building relationships and learning communities seemed to be at the very root of the effective enactment of the principles of CRP that either directly or indirectly impact student learning.

The finding on relationships, of course, connects to the foundational principle of valuing and respecting all students and what they bring to the classroom, and, through that, supporting them to high achievement. As Ladson-Billings (2014) emphasizes, culturally relevant pedagogy has to emanate from the minds and hearts of reflective practitioners. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) underscore this when they discuss how Noddings' (2002) care theory reframes culturally responsive teaching as “a system of moral principles” that involves personal commitment to the ethical component of “caring for” rather than simply “caring about” (p. 1,100).

Alton-Lee (2003), in a comprehensive synthesis captures much of what we know about quality teaching in general such as the role of high expectations, scaffolding for learning, creation of cohesive, caring learning communities, and high-quality feedback. But two of her findings are especially important in the realm of culturally relevant pedagogy. One, effective links must be created between school and the cultural contexts of the students. This finding is echoed by Brown-Jeffrey and Cooper (2011). And, two, whole-school alignment matters in order to support consistent expectations, approaches and a caring, inclusionary atmosphere across classrooms as well as in common spaces such as the halls and lunch room. For example, in moving from dynamic, inclusive learning community in one classroom to a lunch room environment or another classroom that alienates or humiliates, the effects of quality teaching in the first classroom are compromised.

However, whole-school alignment requires strong leadership that reaches back to the previous discussion on school conditions needed for diverse language learners to flourish. While research on leadership for CRP has identified major strands of action such as critical self-reflection; development of culturally responsive teachers; promotion of culturally responsive, inclusive school environments and whole-community engagement, it has also, as has much of the overall literature in CRP, emphasized the contextual nature of culturally

responsive leadership, stating “Because of these differing circumstances, which can determine culturally relevant strategies for dealing with cultural issues in schools, there is not necessarily a universal package of guidelines for becoming a CRSL [culturally responsive school leader]” (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1294).

CRP brings cultural responsiveness to the forefront of teaching diverse learners that, combined with linguistic responsiveness, highlights the changes in practice necessary for international schools to support CLD students. Many of the practices that sit within these approaches connect seamlessly with the research on effective teaching practices. Yes, it is “just” good teaching. However, what CRP does most effectively is remind us again that best practice in teaching actually has to have at the core of it the “Why”. As Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) indicate, there must be a grounding in moral principles that involves personal commitment to responsive teaching to students that you genuinely care for. This is much more than just a list of techniques and strategies. Nevertheless, as Militello, Rallis and Goldring (2009) point out, and of particular relevance to this participatory action research project, “[t]he product of a community of practice is action – that is a change in practice. Changes in beliefs may accompany the change in practice initially — or they may arrive later. Far more important than what people in schools talk about is what staff members in schools *do* differently” (Militello et al., 2009, p. 30).

In focusing on teacher understanding, practice and support for implementation of these practices in iterative cycles of inquiry while building a community of learners in a professional learning community, we will move closer to systemically supporting the type of reflective practitioner behaviour that has the power to shift beliefs and strengthen commitment to get to a stronger and more collective vision of “Why”. In order to do so, it is important to examine the components of effective professional learning which is reviewed in the next section.

## **Teacher Professional Learning**

When considering what professional learning experiences are necessary in order to support teacher efficacy in the increasingly complex classroom environment, we need to consider both content as well as process: What do they need to know and what structures enable them to become increasingly sophisticated and reflective practitioners? Increasing understanding and use of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy in the classroom including disciplinary literacy practices; focused, structured interaction techniques; building background knowledge (connecting to cultural relevance), building mutually respectful and responsible communities of learners with high academic expectations and achievement for all is a big task. In this section, I examine research studies on teacher learning and look at the normative literature on professional learning communities (PLCs).

### **Research Base: Teacher Professional Learning**

In considering the research base on professional learning models that have been proven to impact student learning, good teaching practice matters. The OECD report *Teachers Matter* (2012), communicates both the consensus that “‘teacher quality’ is the single most important variable influencing student achievement” (p. 2) and widening concern about whether teachers, indeed, possess the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of an increasingly complex learning environment and/or whether systems are adapting to provide the kind of structures and professional learning necessary. The series of studies in this section attest to a variety of key components including teachers understanding the need for learning, connecting pedagogical approaches to disciplinary ways of thinking and doing; and the use of ongoing inquiry and reflection to provide over-time support to make responsive evidence-based pedagogical choices.

Timperley and Alton-Lee (2008) in a mixed-method research synthesis of ninety-seven empirical studies attempted to identify the kinds of teacher knowledge that have



demonstrated a positive impact on diverse learners' academic outcomes. Their findings emphasize the need for the cognitive dissonance that Gleeson and Davison (2016) pointed out, but further indicate the professional learning that showed the greatest gains was that which "deepened pedagogical content and assessment knowledge within coherent conceptual frameworks that could then serve as the basis for decisions about practice" (p. 349).

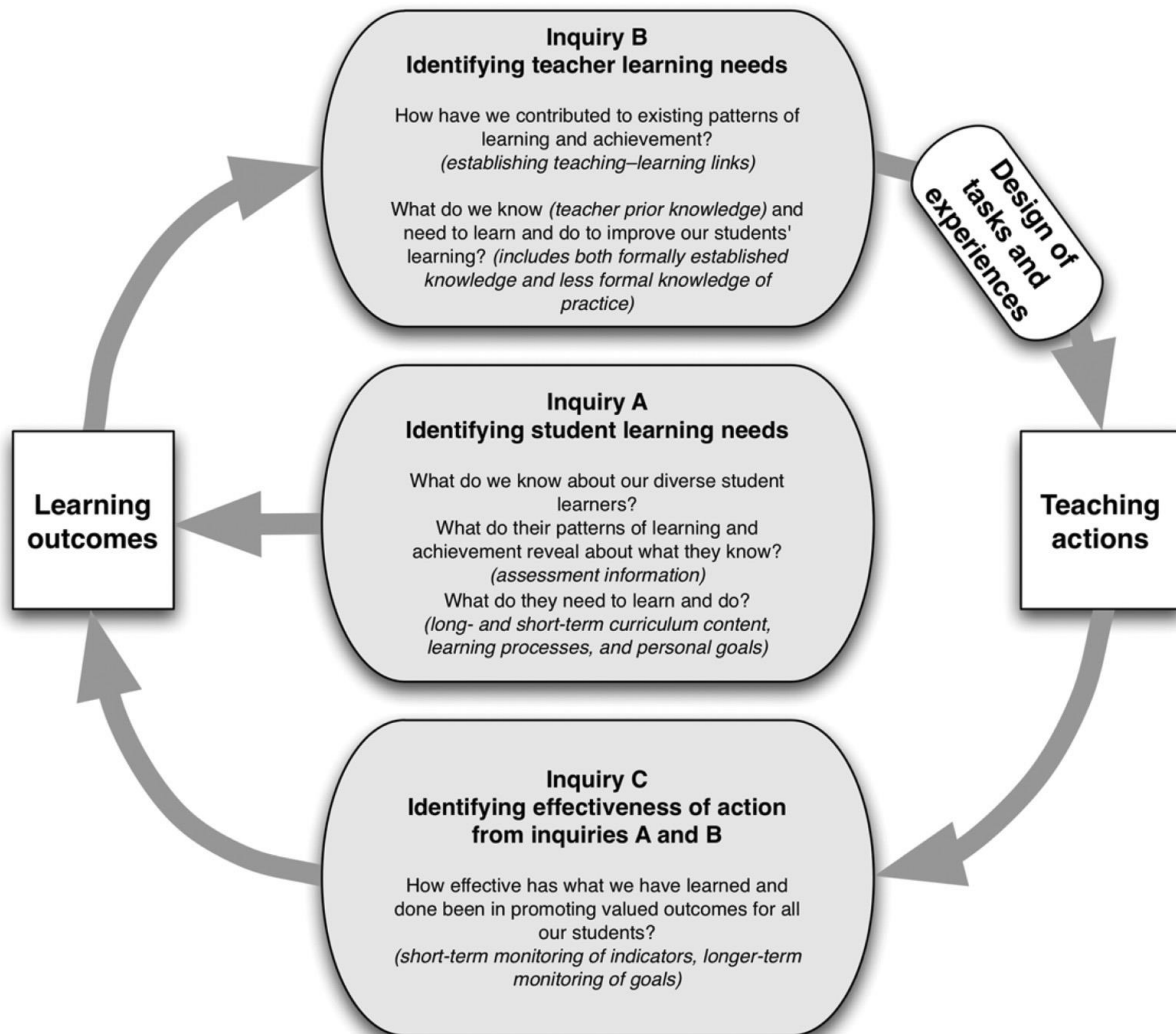
This finding is echoed by those researchers who have called for increasing teachers' understanding and skill in supporting the academic English of particular disciplinary content (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011). However, making on-going, conscious decisions about practice requires teachers to take on an active role of reflective practitioners; in other words, gaining new knowledge and skill combined with follow-up monitoring or coaching to increase self-efficacy in knowing when and how to use the knowledge to best support student learning. There was little evidence that simply increasing time and resources for professional learning increased student learning outcomes if the above conditions are not met (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008).

This analysis led Timperly and Alton-Lee (2008) to present a model of teacher inquiry with three interrelated inquiry cycles including identifying teacher learning needs: "What do we know and need to learn and do to improve our students' learning?"; identifying student learning needs: "What do we know about our diverse student learners?" and "What do they need to learn and do?"; and finally, identifying the effectiveness of action from the previous two inquiries: "How effective has what we have learned and done been in promoting valued outcomes for our students?" (see Figure 5). This approach to teaching as inquiry incorporates the significance of scaffolding for learning and effective feedback that have been shown to substantially impact higher achievement for diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003).

As a holistic, job embedded approach to professional learning that contextualizes learning for both teachers and students, the inquiry model seeks to ensure continual learning through a problem-solving stance on the part of both teachers and students. As Timperly et al. (2008) concluded, “continued engagement was motivated by teachers’ and learners’ continuing to take responsibility for identified problems with student outcomes together with the belief they had the capability to solve them” (p. 353). As Schwartz (2017) emphasizes: “[t]he scientists can give you certain laws of learning, but they can’t put it together into instruction” (p. 1). Teachers *need* to become adaptive experts rather than boiling teaching down to a list of best practices which are employed over and over again despite the results they produce.

In another comprehensive study, Savage, Hindle, Meyer, Hynds, Penetito and Sleeter (2011) examined the Te Kotahitanga national teacher professional development initiative. Implemented in New Zealand, teachers from 33 secondary schools with significant numbers of Maori students participated. With a focus on culturally responsive pedagogies, participants in the professional learning program had to initially, “reject explicitly deficit theorizing as an explanation for Maori student educational underachievement and to instead assume agency” (Savage et al., 2011, p. 186) through care and high expectations for students, classroom management to promote learning, discursive learning interactions and monitoring student learning.

The model of professional learning employed contained many of the components identified by Timperly and Alton-Lee (2007) including over-time, sustained support for teachers; emphasis on specific instructional strategies and content; active, collective learning and peer coaching (p. 186). The researchers conclude that the findings, which indicate Te Kotahitanga was successful in “affirming students as culturally located individuals demonstrated through changes in classroom practice and in student reports about their school



Note. (Timperly et al., 2008, p. 354).

Figure 5. Teacher inquiry model.

and classroom experiences” (Savage et al., 2011, p. 194), demonstrate evidence that systematic, over-time professional learning initiates positive change in classroom instruction in areas important for both cognitive and affective learning. However, the initiative did stop short of making a significant connection between changing practice through culturally responsive pedagogy and actual student achievement.

In international schools, as has been documented by Mulazzi and Nordmeyer (2011), one way to facilitate this type of sustained inquiry and learning is by embedding language specialists within disciplines for an integrated rather than an isolated approach to learning language. As language specialists collaborate with disciplinary specialists to support academic, disciplinary language learning for all students, it creates conditions that support both student learning and on-going teacher professional inquiry and learning.

### **Professional Learning Communities**

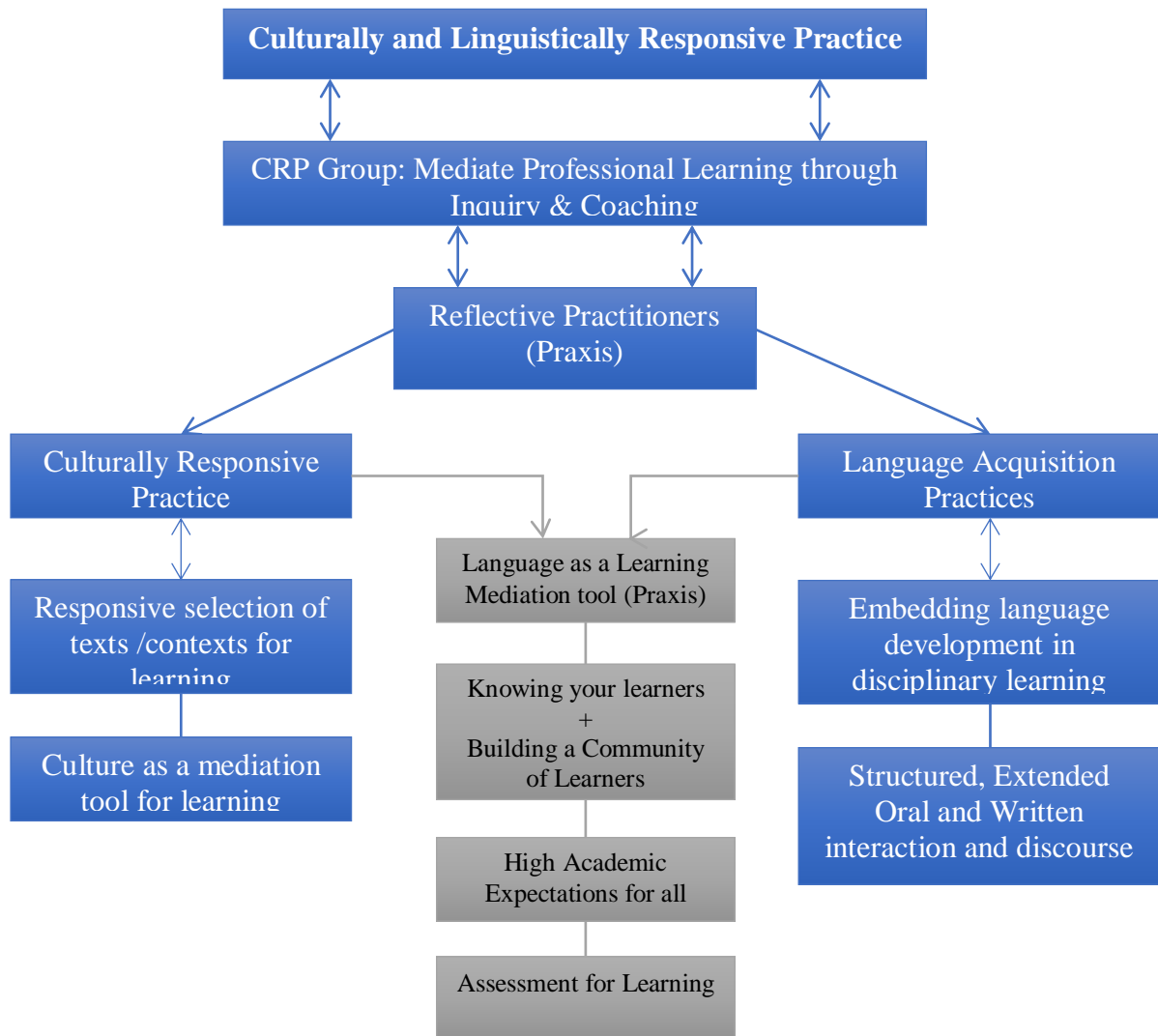
The principles of effective professional learning as discussed here share many similarities with the recent implosion of “professional learning communities” (PLCs) as job-embedded, sustained, collaborative communities focused on teaching and learning. However, as Dufour (2004) points out, it is critical to focus on the core principles of PLCs in order to avoid the all-too-familiar frustration and fizzle. In short, he posits that “[t]o create a professional learning community, focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold yourself accountable for results” (Dufour, 2004, p. 6). Kruse, Louis and Bryk (1994) discuss the important social and human resources that enhance professional communities within a school (which they contend are more vital than structural considerations such as physical proximity and scheduled time), many of which echo the elements of strong reflective practitioners that have already been discussed. Elements such as openness to improvement, trust and respect in relationships, a strong and growing cognitive and skill base, and supportive leadership characterize PLCs that work. Increased

professionalization of the profession or the “development of schools as healthy, professionally sustaining environments in which teachers are encouraged to do their best” (Kruse et al., 1994, p. 6) enables teachers to thrive as adaptive experts.

### **Chapter Summary**

The growing cultural and linguistic diversity of international schools necessitates a new paradigm from which to operate. As the review of the literature suggests, a growing cognitive and skill base through examination of culturally and linguistically responsive practices (CLRP), strong leadership for school conditions that foster CLRP, and deep engagement in a professional community of learners all play a role in supporting and sustaining teachers and teacher-leaders as adaptive experts in the complex international classrooms and schools of today. In Figure 6, I summarize the interrelationship of the literature discussed in the chapter in a graphic representation.

Thus, as we explore the question of “How can we build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of culturally diverse language learners?” we did so as hunter, Emerald and Martin (2013) suggested – as a team of participatory action co-researchers “engaging the community in finding answers and applying those answers to the point of concern” (p. 17). Figure 6 offers a summary of the literature and its connection to the proposed PAR project. In situating the proposed research project in the theoretical, normative and empirical research around the focus of practice, I offer a set of principles and practices that continued to inform our choices. Chapter 3 details the context in which the participatory action research (PAR) sits.



*Figure 6. An initial paradigm from the literature.*

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## **CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT FOR FOP**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a description of the broad context and smaller community in which the PAR project occurred. As indicated in Chapter 1, the focus of the PAR project is to better understand the ways in which teachers could best develop their understanding and use of culturally and linguistically responsive practice. Specifically, I was interested in how we are serving English Language Learners who are nested in the larger context of the faculty, the particular school, the school as it represents an international school perspective, and that of Singapore itself. Like unraveling a ball made of up many strings of yarn, there are both connections and unique attributes to each string; however, all of them weave together to provide a net of understanding of the people and place that is meaningful to the unfolding PAR project. In order to situate the FOP in both the broader and the specific context, I discuss the country, the school, the history of education, the evidence for the FOP within this context, the people and my role as a research-practitioner.

### **Place**

In order to fully understand the context of this PAR, I examine the country in which the school sits including the political environment. Following that I connect the political environment to the school itself and then expand the view to situate the school within the broader history of schooling. Finally, I point to the school-based evidence that led to this focus of practice.

### **Singapore**

Having recently celebrated its 53rd birthday, Singapore is a South East Asia phenomenon. Singapore has become a case study in how to bring a third-world nation into the first world with a strong infrastructure, a highly functioning government and policies and practices that seek to ensure harmony among its cultural and religious groups. This has been

accomplished with strong central leadership, a philosophy of no tolerance for corruption and putting the good of the nation above all else. Loyalty to the nation and to Lee Kwan Yew, known as the founding father who served as the nation's first Prime Minister and governed the small 252 square mile island-nation for three decades, runs high in Singapore. Culturally, loyalty to the nation and the family rank far above individual wants and rights among its culturally diverse citizenry (Shared values, 2015).

Its location and the policies that support strong economic growth has made Singapore a hub for global companies which, in turn, has contributed to the growth of the expatriate population. Although it is among Asia's most expensive cities to live, it consistently ranks in international surveys as providing expatriates an exceptionally high quality of life. The latest figures provided on its foreign workforce puts the number at 790,800 (excluding domestic workers and construction workers) -- all of whom are looking to either avail themselves of the local education system (which is quite strong) or an international education in one of the 30+ international schools established on the island. Competition among international schools is fierce, and the marketing and communications departments at the schools work overtime to distinguish themselves from one another.

Nevertheless, the political environment of Singapore has always been friendly to international schools. Part of Singapore's economic growth plan over the years has included ensuring favorable conditions for multi-national companies to do business here, particularly in the oil and gas as well as finance and banking industries. Attracting the companies and the expatriate employees that come with them has necessitated support for the growing international school market. Brookfield's research (2011, 2012) reported that in 2012, 35% of companies indicated that opportunities for children's education was a family challenge in getting expatriate families to accept assignments, up from 29% the previous year.



The Singapore government has long had a bidding protocol with regard to opening new international schools when they see the need to add additional seats for relocating expatriate families. They have carefully balanced the supply and demand that supported both the families and the schools that needed to fill seats in order to stay financially viable. However, the recent, and perhaps unforeseen, downturn in the economic forecast has, maybe for the first time, put international schools in the situation in which there are far more seats available than there are expatriate students to fill them. The Singapore government prohibits, except through strict application processes, Singaporeans to attend international schools after the age of six.

Hayward and the private equity group that owns Hayward is situated in this political landscape. For the first three and a half years of my tenure with the school, the political atmosphere of the parent company and the senior administration was shrouded in what could only be described as secrecy. "They" was the word associated with decisions – such as that to add the aforementioned SEAL program – to whom no one individual or group could be held responsible. Yet, in the spring of 2016, changes were afoot. The current Superintendent was retiring after more than five years with the school, and, with a new CEO in place in the UK, further evolution became a reality when the parent company took steps to replace several corporate senior administrators. This change resulted in a new regional CEO, a new Director of Admissions and a new Superintendent as the 2016-2017 school year got underway.

Nearly immediately, the administration took steps to bring the parent company as well as the operational and educational administrators at the school together to work collectively making the best decisions for the school moving forward. The company CEO, the regional CEO and even the company board president out of the UK became visible at the school. The message of “it's the education product” that matters most to the sustainability of the company was consistent and delivered by everyone at all levels of leadership. The tide began to turn.

Currently, there are more voices at the table, transparency has become a tenet of communication, and decision making based on students and educators' recommendations is becoming more the norm. Early signs that it is making a difference is the 13% turnover in teachers in 2016-2017 in comparison to the over 20% of the previous year. The political climate is turning, but it is also turning in the face of a tougher economic climate than the school has ever faced.

My role and voice at the table, along with the other senior administrators, has grown considerably with the change in Superintendent and beyond. Collaborative conversation and decision-making is beginning to make a difference in our action space and feeling of safety in stepping into that space.

### **Hayward**

Hayward International School (HIS) sits in the midst of the highly competitive Singapore economy. Known for its rapid growth, it has become, in the short years of its existence, a Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Counsel of International Schools (WASC/CIS) and full International Baccalaureate (IB) World accredited school offering the full line of IB Programmes – Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) - as well as the Advanced Placement Program.

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018-2019, the school has grown from 70 students in its inception year to over 3,000 students with 47 different primary languages from 67 passport countries. Sixty-five percent of the faculty are new to the school within the past two years both because of high turnover and growth. It graduated its first class in June of 2015 with 24 students and by June of 2018 that number was 83.

A proprietary school, Hayward is owned by a UK based company that currently owns 68 international schools throughout the world. Hayward is marketed heavily as a rigorous academic program with both international (as an IB World school) and American roots

(utilizing standards documents such as the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards frameworks as a learning foundation). Currently, as part of its ‘rigor’ all students are expected to access the Diploma Programme (DP) or Advanced Placement (AP) courses in their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years as the school has only three graduation pathways: the DP, the AP or a blended program made up of both AP and DP courses. Offering only these rigorous courses as a path to high school graduation is a nod to the traditional, college-ready academic rigor for which the school has been marketed. The vision of the school: “Provide the best teaching and learning so that all can achieve more than they believe they can” has been operationalized.

A significant change in student population prompted by the economic landscape has seen some year levels doubling their number of English language learners (see Table 4). As Table 4 illustrates, the increase is particularly true for the middle school grade levels in which there are more mainstream ELLs as well as the addition of a “Sheltered English as an Additional Language” program (SEAL) at each year level in the Elementary and in core subject areas in the secondary through Grade 9. The SEAL classrooms consist solely of beginning language learners that remain sheltered for a large percentage of the day and are mainstreamed in specialist areas. The rapidly increasing population of linguistically diverse learners has challenged the school, the teachers, and the students.

An additional demographic change is the acceptance of students in guardianship status. Throughout the school, 147 students live within some sort of guardianship arrangement. Fifty-three of these are in the middle school grades 6-8. While the great majority are from China (65%), they hail from sixteen different countries, the majority of them developing countries. While the school is compliant with Singapore law in this area, the child safeguarding and well-being issues of this arrangement are obvious. Hayward has recently appointed a Homestay/Guardianship Administrator to watch their attendance,

Table 4

*Numbers of English Language Learners*


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Grade Level	SY 2014-2015 Total # of Mainstream EAL students	SY 2016-2017 Total # of Mainstream and Sheltered EAL students	SY 2017-2018 Total # of Mainstream and Sheltered EAL students
Grade 1	34	56	43
Grade 2	37	53	34
Grade 3	30	45	38
Grade 4	25	61	38
Grade 5	16	39	66
Grade 6	12	39	44
Grade 7	11	38	43
Grade 8	9	46	42
Grade 9	8	32	55

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check on living arrangements and, should there seem to be cause, conduct home visits. Due to the rapidity with which these changing demographics are impacting the school, they are not yet fully met with necessary attention to resourcing and providing the teachers or students a rich supportive environment for quality and equitable teaching and learning. The complications of understanding a need and facing it are difficult in school change, and that is the case currently at Hayward.

A real and pressing problem that has led to teacher dissatisfaction and loss of efficacy is teachers expressing concern about their preparation to teach the changing demographic. In a survey, teachers rated the item: 'I receive the appropriate training and support to do my job to the best of my ability' poorly. Indeed, language acquisition is a specialized area of teaching and learning and, in particular, in secondary schools many teachers are disciplinary experts but not well-versed in the literacies of their discipline or how to teach those explicitly. As a result, suddenly faced with large groups of students who are unable to access the content without disciplinary literacy as a strong thread woven into instruction, teachers are concerned. To fully support teachers in developing that knowledge, understanding and skill requires additional resources. As Pierce (2013) indicates, "It is curious that international schools pride themselves on the number of nationalities they contain but find the number of languages those students bring to be an embarrassing and expensive problem" (p. xvii). And not only expensive, but also exceedingly complex for the school and community to build collective understanding around and come to an inclusive and positive path forward for all.

In a number of forums (parent coffees, Superintendent coffees, parent-teacher conferences) at least two broad segments of our parent community are highly concerned about the influx of language learners and their perceived impact. On one hand, our English-as-a-first-language families (primarily Western) voice concern about the large numbers of Asian language learners having a negative impact on their children's access to a rigorous

education, claiming that too much of the teachers' time is spent on supporting language learners. On the other, many of our English-as-a-second-or third-language families, in particular those from other Asian countries, despair over the growing number of language learners. Because one of their chief reasons for enrolling their children in an American-International school is ready access to English-as-a-first-language speakers and a Western education, they fear this is being eroded as the Asian language learner population grows.

A school action about language instruction is one of several equity issues at the school. As an IB world school, one of the central tenets we aspire to is to be child or student centered, yet to many in our student, teacher and parent communities, the question seems to be: "Whose child is at the center?" And the answer to this is too often one of exclusivity rather than inclusivity.

### **Historical Context**

The quest for equitable education has a long history in the histories of American education, but this quest is a more recent storyline in international education. Nevertheless, as I discuss below, both trajectories share some important threads as they apply to this research focus – in particular that of the political and socio-cultural issues surrounding the education of a steady stream of "immigrants".

As the 'administrative progressives' drove the American educational agenda in the 20th century, increasing access became one of their drivers. However, as Levin (cited in Tyack & Cuban, 1997) points out, while they understood the need for differentiation for access, that differentiation was not differentiation for equity but, rather, differentiation that came with labels and tracks. The interest was primarily access for social efficiency with a sprinkling of civic readiness or democratic equality mixed in, but not social mobility (Labaree, 2008).

As education evolved in the US, major rulings such as 1954s *Brown v. Board of Education* and 1965s *Elementary and Secondary Education Act with Title 1*, educational equity – and 'permission' to demand it – came to the forefront. And with it, came the question as to whether equal access truly promoted social justice and equity and, whether the – mainstream, mainly white – teachers had the knowledge and skill to support such a diverse student population. In the 1960s for example, "Only about 17% of American teachers are nonwhite, compared to 40% of American public-school students" (Goldstein, 2004, p. 123). Similarly, today at Hayward, approximately 19% of the faculty are non-Western in comparison with over 30% of the student body.

Ella Flagg Young, early on, understood that diversity in education deserved to be celebrated and supported when she objected to the use of "melting pot" with regard to schools and their work with immigrant children. According to Goldstein (2014), "she believed the phrase obscured children's individuality and disrespected their various cultures" (p. 80). This was echoed years later in defense of bilingual and bicultural education with its power to preserve mother tongue and promote pride in cultural heritage as an important foundation that promotes additional learning. It was a call for a more expansive, heterogeneous educational experience and curriculum that offered respectful and respected differentiated choices for all learners. And while American education responded to this call for a period of time in the 1960s and 70s, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in the early 80s set the stage for what, at face value, appeared to be a call for higher, more rigorous standards for all students, but sought to do it through standardization that had serious equity implications for the schools' heterogeneous populations.

Similarly, traditional international schools have been established and grown up targeting a homogenous population — primarily Western expatriate families working for global industries, the diplomatic corps and NGO's. In their home countries, these individuals

would be considered middle class and their expectations were, essentially, to find a transplanted national system that would afford their children an opportunity to compete for spots in prestigious institutions of higher education in their home countries – social efficiency. An expectation that remains to this day.

Sorting and tracking was not initially needed internally in traditional international schools because the admissions policies of the schools and/or the policies of the host country (such as no host country nationals being allowed to apply and attend) accomplished that at the door. A select population targeted the school and the school targeted a particular demographic for students. Specialists, such as English as an Additional Language teachers or learning support teachers, were a small part of the faculty, if at all, and the schools' curricula were often simply transplanted national curricula or curriculum frameworks.

However, with the growing global economy and the burgeoning and mobile middle class in developing countries, the international education system is now viewed as a profitable market. Parents view the school as more desirable than the national systems because of the focus on transferable thinking skills rather than rote memorization. This shift has had a profound impact on both the traditional international schools, which are enrolling far greater numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners and on a growing market of for-profit schools cropping up in the developing world.

The schools generally serve the economically advantaged national population with an appetite for an 'international' education which is seen as superior to the national systems – primarily due to the hoped-for social mobility in pursuit of social efficiency that comes with such an opportunity (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). However, in some countries, such as mainland China, national policy prevents nationals from enrolling their children in internationally owned schools. As such, the primary opportunity they have to find an international education is to go abroad ('immigrate') – to other countries to attend



international schools such as Hayward. While Hayward initially may not have accepted students that failed to meet certain admissions requirements, in the current economic climate, admissions policies at many international schools (including Hayward) have been altered to enable greater access and maintain student numbers. But again, greater access to the schoolhouse does not necessarily equate to equitable access in educational opportunity.

Further, just like the 'melting pot' reference above, there is some dissonance in the community about the expectation of all students adjusting to the “Hayward way” (e.g., a Western-dominated, English education with strict rigorous academic standards) versus the “Hayward way” adjusting to the students and families who have come into our community. We are working toward an evolving curriculum embracing cultural and linguistic diversity as a strength of an internationally minded, global ready IB school; and working toward evolving our attitudes, strategies and structures to ensure success for all -- much more of a democratic equality focus with collaboration trumping competition. But as Tyack and Cuban (1997) indicate, "In the abstract, people may favor giving all children a fair chance, but at the same time they want *their* children to succeed in the competition for economic and social advantage" (p. 29). The tensions between private and public good resonate in schools.

I see international schools, particularly those that are part of the IB world and are beholden to its mission, as needing to lead the way in structures, policies, curricula, attitudes, and strategies that are joyfully inclusive and celebrate and learn through the development of international-mindedness within and among their own communities and the broader IB community. But this means committing as a community to the goals of democratic equality and social mobility. It means spending more of our time in dialogue and support of changing psychological and socio-cultural frameworks rather than remaining caught up in political and economic discourse. It means understanding and embracing that our schools are coming closer to mirroring the global context that is our world.

This is a new lens for me. I have worked in international schools for twenty-four years and have come to accept the competitive nature and exclusivity that they reflect. The students, in general, already had the economic means, and they were poised to become the leaders of tomorrow. So, if we could just grow them as caring people as well as thoughtful, critical thinkers, they had the power to change the world for the good of all. While that premise has truth, I now believe quite strongly that the true path forward for international schools, which really do seek to live the IB mission while striving toward achievement of their own visions (such as Hayward's), is to move closer to what Haydon and Thompson (2013) call "'Type B' 'ideological' international schools (p. 5) such as the United World Colleges. That is, international schools that seek to bring together heterogeneous (culturally, linguistically, economically—by providing scholarships) young people to live and study together with a "view to breaking down the barriers that so often arise through ignorance and prejudice" (Haydon & Thompson, 2013, p. 6).

Interestingly, however, this is not a fast-growing segment of international schools. As Brummitt and Keeling (2013) indicate, most international schools are now for-profit schools where "enrolment is increasingly dominated by the richest 5% of non-English speaking parents looking for places at international schools in their own countries" (p. 29). In the political and economic climates in which international schools live and grow, this will not be an easy tide to turn. Nevertheless, as Tyack and Cuban (1997) point out, a more valuable and sustainable model for school reform and change needs to focus on the "inside out." In this case, "inside out" means focusing on instructional practice that improves learning – all learning including "rich intellectual, civic, and social development, not simply as impressive test scores" (Brummit & Keeling, 2013, p. 136). It is in the spirit of this type of contextualized, educational change that the research is anchored and, in the next section, I describe the evidence I used to decide on the FOP.

## Evidence of FOP

In an attempt to ensure that the identified focus of practice is, indeed, seen as an important area for focus in the school community and not just a bias of the researcher, I undertook several diagnostic activities over the course of the 2016-2017 school year. The changing demographics and the 2016 Voice of the Employee survey results indicate a decreasing sense of efficacy on the part of the teachers. In addition, data point to a serious pattern of decline in the level of student reading scores across the upper elementary and middle school (see Table 5).

Given this evidence, I hosted two dialogue opportunities with a group of twelve teachers from across the school to explore questions related to literacy practices and learning. The first was an open World Café, and the other a form of Discovery Centers utilizing a variety of resources ranging from Knowledge Works *Futures of Learning*, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education, a recently released report *Turning the Tide* from a consortium of universities including Harvard, and a report on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills from the World Economic Forum. In each case participants responded to these overarching questions: “What does a rich, equitable literacy learning environment look like?” to “What does education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to engage all students look like?” and “How might we explore student voice?” Through dialogue in these sessions, three patterns of concern emerged: (a) creating a collective vision for learning and literacy that reaches beyond traditional measures of academic rigor (such as DP/AP scores) but supports high quality learning; (b) recognizing and valuing student voice and ownership in the dialogue as well as an understanding of the importance of community in education; and (c) moving toward more inspired, student-centered learning for all students, including ELLs.

From the general concerns expressed at the teacher dialogue opportunities, the focused concern about English language learners came to the forefront over and over again –

Table 5

*Number of Students Reading <1 Grade Level Below as Measured by MAP*

Grade	Total Students	EAL No of Students		SEAL No of Students		Total %
3	221	13	6%	21	10%	15%
4	250	25	10%	18	7%	17%
5	241	19	8%	11	5%	12%
6	200	13	7%	25	13%	19%
7	217	13	6%	27	12%	18%
8	167	10	6%	24	14%	20%
9	153	12	8%	15	10%	18%

*Note.* < 1 Grade below.

primarily in the area of their learning and achievement opportunities in the current system, but also in terms of their social-emotional support and inclusion. These concerns were voiced even more loudly in the recent 2017 Voice of the Employee Survey (VOE, 2017) that reveals a myriad of positions that exemplify the concerns of many of the teacher respondents. For some, as is demonstrated by these verbatim comments, the problem clearly lies with the school's admissions policies and practices:

They should also stop recruiting children with very limited English ability into our school, where the lingua franca is English.

Accepting so many non-English speaking students. These students are isolating themselves from the rest of the students.

Accepting children that are not suitable to the school's environment and curriculum.

Alternatively, some respondents view the problem as creating inequitable or untenable teaching and learning situations for teachers and students, as revealed by these comments:

Stop changing the learning / teaching environment to accommodate the non-English speaking students and dumb down the curriculum for the English-speaking students.

Accept beginner EAL (WIDA <1) students are not ready to access the curriculum. It is not fair on students and teachers to be placed in this learning environment.

Other students' learning experiences are being changed due to an influx of EAL students.

Finally, for some respondents the problem lies with ignoring broader affective or moral impact on the school and students within it:

The ALS (sic) seem like a money grab to me. This format of language learning goes against all professional research and experience. Having a group of only new English speakers with 2 adult English speakers all day is bad teaching practice. Unethical.

I personally feel that there is an inequity in the way students are treated because of the nationality they represent.

Rapid increase of EAL population without appropriate supports in place for these students at school, in particular students who are enrolled with guardians. There does not seem to be a recognition of the impact of the cultural change that this student population shift is causing.

The teacher comments quoted above are taken verbatim from an anonymous employee survey (all were written into a comment box titled “What things can we improve?”) and raise a whole host of areas for further dialogue. Comments evoke directly competing messages as to what the issue is, who owns the issue, and who has responsibility for working toward solutions. I found no references in all of the verbatim comments listed—and there were over 1,200—that perceived the increasing diversity of the community as an asset to be embraced and built upon. This raise concerns in my mind—concerns which will remain in the forefront as I explore the overarching focus of practice for this action research project: “How can we build the capacity of middle school SEAL teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice to improve the affective and cognitive learning of culturally diverse language learners?”

### **People**

“. . . data do not define problems; people do!” (Spillane & Miele, 2007; as cited in Spillane, 2012, p. 38).

As the participatory action research (PAR) project got underway in the Fall 2017, there were a number of considerations as to who to invite and involve. There were a host of changes: a new principal at the middle school; a whole-school structure in place looking at literacy practice across the school; English as an Additional Language department and Director, and seven teachers in the Sheltered EAL program. In this section, I discuss the evolution of people’s involvement as the project got underway beginning with the structural consideration of the school-wide curriculum inquiry team and concluding with short biographies of the five teachers who formed the backbone of the research efforts.

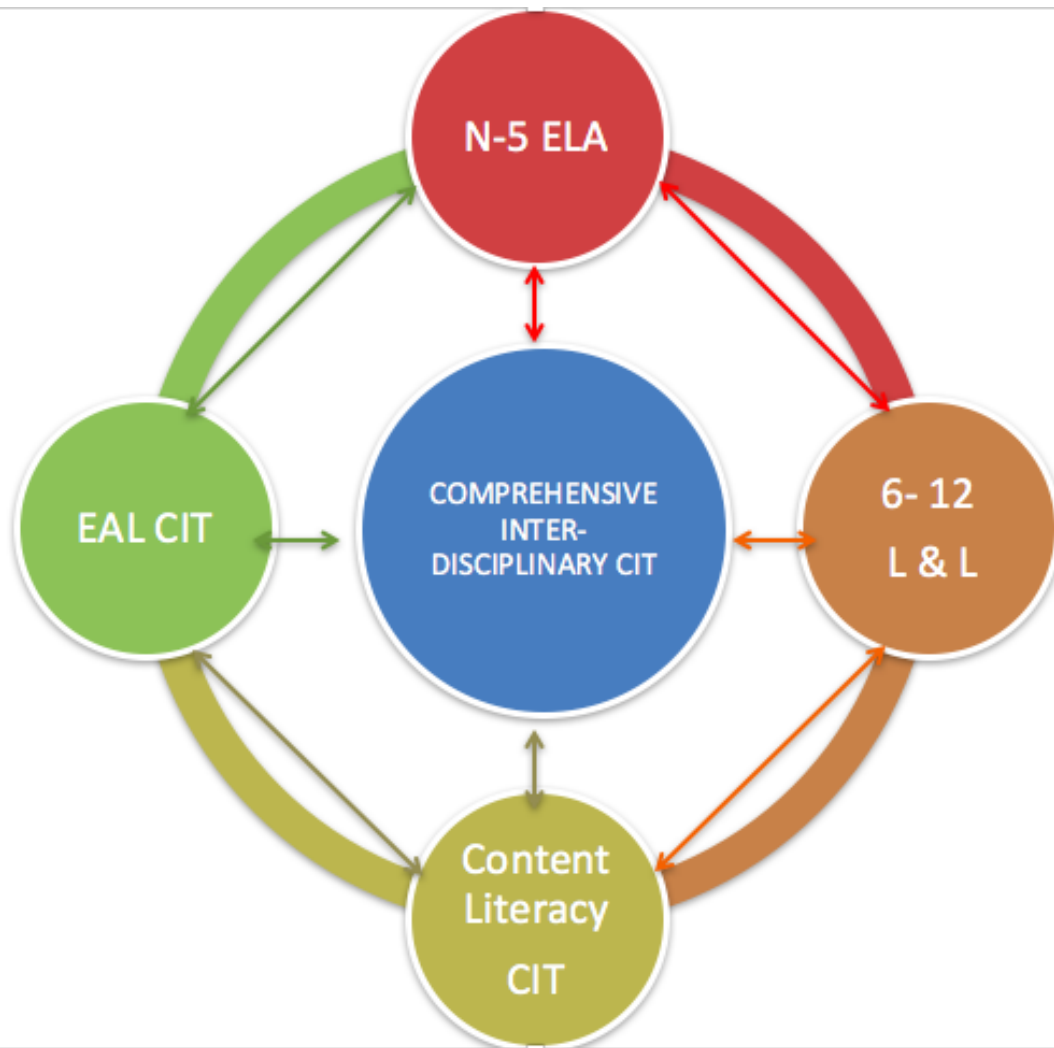
#### **Curriculum Inquiry Team (CIT)**

The Director of English as an Additional Language (EAL), who has been with the school and the department for five years, is responsible for English as an Additional Language department. I worked closely with her as the Director of Curriculum and

Assessment. In particular, we worked closely together during the 2016-2017 school year when all the languages – English, EAL, and World Languages entered into their initial year of curriculum inquiry.

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, prompted by both the changing demographics and programs as well as the overall curriculum cycle, I formed a school-wide, comprehensive Curriculum Inquiry Team (CIT) to establish a vision of engaged and equitable literacy learning at the school. I sent a call for applications to serve on a core inquiry team to all faculty with the intent of selecting a team that represented all divisions (Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Secondary comprised of grades 6-12) as well as multiple disciplines (English, science, design, individuals and societies, arts, HPE, ICT) in the secondary. Over thirty applications were returned, and a core team of thirteen were selected and endorsed by the respective divisional Pedagogical Leadership Teams (comprised primarily of principals, myself, and curriculum/IB coordinators at each division). It is important to note, perhaps, that this is the first time deep inquiry work had been done across divisions of this school and, certainly, the first time for such a CIT to be formed. The core team met five times during SY 2016-2017. Its biggest accomplishment was drafting Guiding Statements of equitable, engaged literacy learning for Hayward (see Appendix B) and the subsequent Language policy required by the IB (see Appendix C).

Following from the overall school draft of the literacy guiding statements, several smaller, focus CIT groups formed as offshoots with at least one member of the core CIT team and myself sitting on them: An N-5 ELA CIT for the elementary, an EAL CIT, and a secondary ELA CIT. There were further plans to form a Content Literacy CIT at the secondary level to look at cross-disciplinary literacy during the 2017-2018 SY although, in the end, with other pressing projects, that did not materialize (see Figure 7). The purpose of



*Figure 7.* The curriculum inquiry team model.

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these groups was to begin reflective exercises to determine gaps and areas for growth within their specific area in reference to the literacy vision statement.

### **CPR Team**

Initially, a group of three key individuals who were a part of these CIT groups came together to form the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) team for the inquiry project. I invited them to be CPR partners due to their high level of engagement and interest as well as their key roles in supporting teachers in their respective departments. The group included: RB, the Director of EAL; LS, the secondary language and literature teacher and head of department; and MR, a middle school SEAL teacher and head of department. There was potential for identifying additional key members including the new Middle School Principal and the MYP Coordinator who both have pedagogical leadership responsibilities. However, as the project progressed, the actual CPR team became five core Sheltered EAL teachers with intermittent support from RB and SK, the new middle school Principal.

The CPR's and I met to have an initial semi-structured discussion about their background narrative that contributed to their volunteering to sit at this table for this research journey. Two of the participating teachers, MR and PB are discipline-based teachers who have been with the school over multiple years. The other three participants NB, DC and CM were new to the school in the 2017-2018 SY and were the initial co-teachers for the new model of supporting new SEAL students within discipline-based classes.

Originally from the Philippines, MR is, herself, a second language learner who demonstrates great empathy and caring for her beginning language learners. She has been with the school for three years having been recruited mid-year to be the initial secondary SEAL teacher when the program first began in January of 2016. She is a living witness to education providing opportunities for social mobility as her hard work as a student enabled her to achieve scholarship status and complete a university education in her home country. A

16-year veteran teacher, since her arrival at Hayward, MR has been a strong advocate for her students. She summarizes her philosophy of teaching through the following:

I believe opportunity plays a very important role in the life of a learner. If a student is given numerous and various opportunities to display his or her skills, exhibit his/her talents; revise and relearn, every student will have the chance to be successful. Every student is unique and the teacher should create opportunities to highlight that uniqueness or individuality.

PB is an Australian-trained teacher who has worked with language learners for all of his six years as a teacher – both internationally and in his home country. Recently involved in Master’s program focused on the experience of aboriginal students in boarding schools in Australia, he understands both the opportunities and challenges that cultural and linguistic diversity brings to an educational setting. Currently PB is the SEAL teacher in individuals and societies or humanities in the middle school. He summarizes his philosophy of education as “constructivist, incorporating language development into authentic subject-based learning.”

Dedicating her career to teaching English to language learners, NB is a life-long learner who has twenty years of teaching experience and has been with the school just over a year. An avid traveler and world citizen, NB considers teaching her “calling in life”. She indicates that “it is with great pride that I assume the role of a teacher, facilitator, guide/mentor and researcher, as my students are an extension of myself . . . when they succeed, I succeed.” NB works as the Grade 8 Sheltered EAL teacher.

Joining NB as a Sheltered EAL (SEAL) specialist and a member of the CPR team is DC who has also made a career out of working with language learners although he has only recently been awarded a formal teaching certification. He first worked as a relief teacher in the school and, because of the compassion and care he demonstrated for learners, was offered a formal SEAL teaching position just over a year ago. In describing himself as a teacher, DC says, “I always try to act as a facilitator in the classroom . . . I am not teaching to show off

what I know on a topic, I'm there to build access and passion for new ideas and skills." DC works as the Grade 6 SEAL specialist.

Rounding out the CPR team and the middle school sheltered EAL team is CM an 11-year veteran educator whose passion and skill as a teacher was initially motivated by working as a counselor in a migrant summer institute run by her mother. As she indicates, "I loved the idea of helping others become successful as a way to make a living." Over her years in the States, CM worked with migrant students, parents, language learners and learners in need of learning support. It was her decision to accept a fellowship with the U.S. Department of State that led her to overseas positions and work in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Timor Leste as part of that fellowship before joining the ranks of the international schools. When asked to share her philosophy on teaching, CM responds, "I am a constructivist who believes in using the whole child approach . . . planning and collaboration are key when developing a supporting and engaging classroom environment that exhibits dignity and respect for all."

It is not difficult to understand why I felt confident that this group is an advocacy team not only for more equitable access to learning for students, but also for creating and sustaining important professional learning community principles among themselves.

### **My Role**

As I near nearly a quarter century of work in international education, I find myself continuing to wrestle with many of the same questions that have dogged my educational experiences for most of my life. Foremost, is a question about how, or if, we can finally begin to truly make education student-centered and relevant to the real world so that it becomes a dynamic, impactful and joyful journey – for both the students and the educators involved. How do we get to the place of nurturing and growth that sustains and honors everyone's assets and dreams over time?

In some respects, that is my role here. As someone with oversight of both the curriculum and teacher professional learning, and as someone who believes that everything that impacts learning *is* curriculum – from the learning environment to teacher dispositions and attitudes to student affect to the choice of content and resources – my reach is vast. But vast does not mean deep. And unless our efforts at evolving into this vision grows roots in the community, its life will be short-lived. However, I am committed to thinking deeply and strategically and to involving teachers deeply in the conversation for understanding from the micro context of the classroom and how we can improve the experiences for the increasing numbers of ELL students. I have a voice at the senior administration table, and I see my role as one that can bring other voices to the table.

The role of researcher that I assumed in the participatory action research project added new dimension to my role. I welcomed the intentionality that it brought to my work through the deliberate gathering and analysis of data. It seems to me that the deliberate process seeks to ensure the type of thoughtful data-driven decision making that holds promise for deep change – change in not only in how we make decisions, but fundamental change in the ways that we reflect on and wrestle with problems of practice.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented overview of the context of Singapore, international schools in general as well as Hayward International School including the context, people and processes that have given rise to the focus of practice for this action research project. The next chapter details how the researcher and co-practitioner researcher team planned to enact iterative cycles of action research to explore how we can build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

## **CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Introduction**

In the broadest sense, the participatory action research (PAR) project is meant to bring intentionality to how teacher-leaders and teachers talk about and work with learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). My theory of action was: if we can build professional learning communities to reframe how we talk about our diverse language learners and co-create structures and processes that support teachers in growing effective strategies around principles of culturally and linguistically responsive practices, then we can begin to see increasingly equitable access to learning for our students who are CLD. The participatory action research design, then, is meant to intentionally reframe how we talk about our diverse language learners so that we can solve dilemmas of practice collaboratively and more effectively.

Thus, I began the participatory action research project by building a professional learning community with a Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team that is deeply involved with leading learning and practice in cultural and linguistic diversity. The original intent of a CPR team of teacher-leaders and administration became, for the most part, a team of teachers and myself. The CPR team worked with the researcher to examine and alter their practices. In two iterative cycles of participatory inquiry and action, we collectively engaged in building the capacity of the teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of culturally diverse language learners through increasing understanding of CLRP, which led to increasingly effective planning for learning and acting for learning in the classroom.

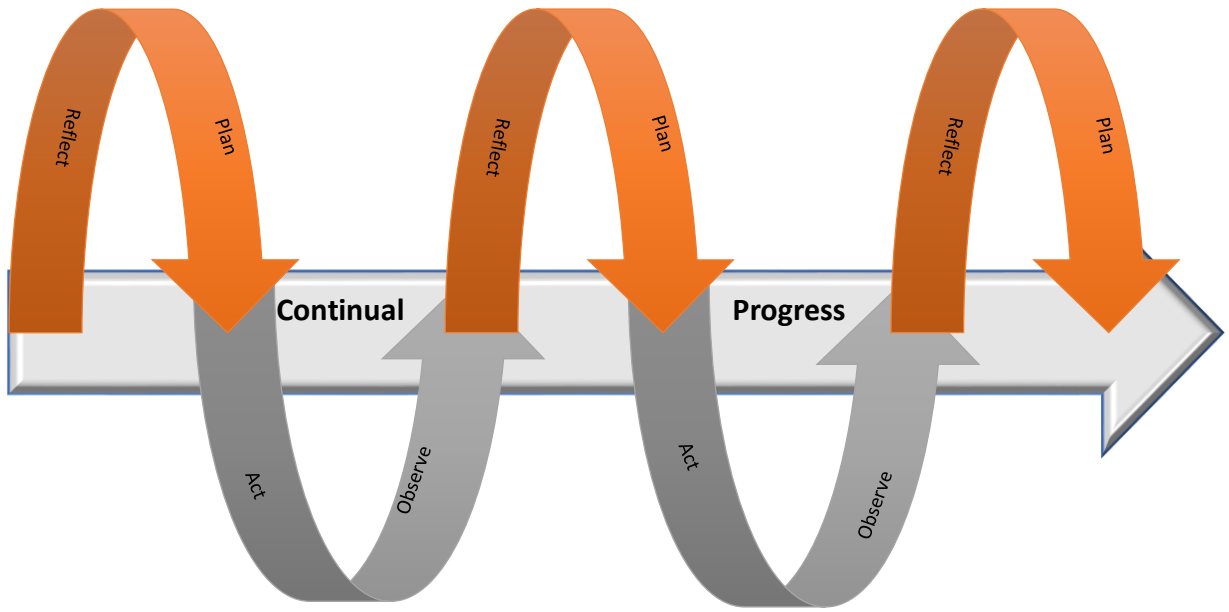
This chapter outlines the design and methodology of the PAR project, including a justification for the selection of participatory action research as the methodology as well as a description of the cycles of inquiry, participants, data collection tools and data analysis

methods. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the role of praxis or reflection as well as the limitations of the study.

### **Research Design**

Teaching and learning in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom is a complex process; professional learning to support that teaching and learning is equally complex. Consequently, I chose qualitative research, which Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate is effective for the in-depth analysis of complex processes, as the overarching research design. Carr and Kemmis (1986) posit that action research has the double aim of improvement and involvement in all phases of planning acting, observing and reflecting cycles (see Figure 8). This is echoed by Stringer (2014) who indicates that the primary purpose of action research is to “provide the means for people to engage in systematic inquiry and investigation to design an appropriate way of accomplishing a desired goal and to evaluate its effectiveness” (p. 6). He emphasizes the importance of engaging the community – or all those who are affected by the issue – in the planned inquiry. While this particular PAR project focused on a small sub-group of the Hayward teaching community, they were closest to the work and could articulate the ways teachers can change their practice to serve their culturally and linguistically diverse students. With an emphasis on contextualized *action* and *research* and a significant component of reflection to inform next steps, action research connects directly with the research-based inquiry cycles of professional learning that are most likely to forge growth-orientated change in practice (Timperley & Alton Lee, 2008).

Similarly, Morales (2016) in a review of literature surrounding participatory action research (PAR), identifies several key components including a change orientation situated in a particular context with a cyclical, collaborative approach to liberation. She elaborates that change, either personal or collective, is its own success indicator. Further, the cycles of the



*Figure 8.* Cycles of action research.

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building knowledge, skill and expertise; capacity-building for using evidence to inform decisions; and professional development.

Action research (AR) is an approach to research that is rooted in the philosophical basis of the constructivist and transformative worldviews. AR is constructivist in that it rests on a paradigm of participatory social construction to understand experiences. In this project, its roots as a transformative worldview match the attention to socio-cultural experiences of diverse groups that have typically been marginalized (Mertens, 2010, as cited in Creswell, 2014). In this study, that focus is on the knowledge and skill of primarily Western, English-as-a-first-language teachers ensuring equitable access to learning for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse within an international school where access to learning is mediated by command of the English language and dominated by Western culture. With these paradigms as the underpinnings, the qualitative action research design sought to enact positive change through considering both the experiences of the teachers and the students in order to create inquiry learning conditions that translated into increasingly effective culturally and linguistically responsive practice within teachers' classrooms.

### **Research Questions**

The PAR project responded to an overarching question: How can we build the capacity of middle school SEAL teachers to understanding and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice to impact the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse?

The research sub-questions, on which we collected formative evidence, included:

- To what extent can the middle school teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice?
  - How effectively do teachers build a community of learners within classrooms that are culturally and linguistically diverse?



- How effectively do teachers use research-based practices to teach students who are CLD?
- To what extent have members of the co-practitioner research (CPR) team grown in their understandings and leadership of culturally and linguistically responsive practices?
- How effectively do I use my leadership action space to support the learning work?

### **Cycles of Action Research**

In order to plan, implement and gauge the capacity of the CPR team to grow in their understanding and engagement in CLRP with the Sheltered EAL students, I engaged in two cycles of participatory action research from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. As illustrated in Table 6, the goals are aligned with the research questions which lead to intended outcomes that, when aggregated, seek to provide cumulative evidence to answer to the overarching research question.

**PAR Cycle One.** The first cycle of action research involved building a strong professional learning community with the co-practitioner researcher (CPR) team of participating teachers, while also ascertaining the initial understanding and practice at the middle school with regard to culturally and linguistically diverse practices. The initial cycle included teacher-leaders and administrators as part of the CPR team. They contributed to the initial framing of the project through participation in dialogue with the middle school teachers and heads of department on the principles of CLRP. However, as the Cycle progressed, it became clear that within the Sheltered EAL program, a more beneficial CPR group would be the five teachers who volunteered to participate in the project. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

I obtained informed consent on the potential risks and benefits of participation from all teachers, teacher-leaders and administrators involved in both the initial and final CPR

Table 6

*Cycles of Action Research*

Goals	Input/Activities	Timeline	Outcomes
Establish evidence for the focus of practice	Facilitating literacy Curriculum Inquiry Teams Analyzing 2017 Voice of the Employee Survey Analyzing reading levels of students	Diagnostic: Oct. 2016 – May 2017	FOP established with evidence from the context.
Analyze to what extent the middle school SEAL teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice.	Mapping the Class Planning meeting observations (2x) Classroom observations (2x) Semi-structured follow up interviews (2x) CPR Team Community Learning Exchange Development of Guiding Statements/ Foundational Documents Transfer Community Learning Exchange	AR Cycle 2 AR Cycle 1, 2 AR Cycle 1, 2 AR Cycle 1, 2 AR Cycle 2 AR Cycle 2	Increasing understanding of and skill in CLRP in planning and acting for learning Increasing efficacy and commitment as a reflective practitioner Increasing modeling and championing of CLRP practice within the context.
Support the CPR team in developing further understanding and leadership for CLRP	Writing reflective memos by the CRP team  Conducting semi-structured interviews	AR Cycle 1, 2  AR Cycle 2	Increasing understanding of CLRP as a reflective practitioner Increasing evidence-based decision making
Effectively use my leadership action space to support CLRP learning work.	Implementing ongoing PLC interaction and planning with CRP Writing reflective memos	AR Cycle 1, 2 AR Cycle 1, 2	Increasing efficacy as a reflective action research practitioner Increasing evidence-based decision making

teams. The planned learning community was intended to engender learning among the participants that is aligned to the learning that I envisaged participants would then transfer to their interactions with their students. This was a key element in the PAR project since, as Gutiérrez (2000) posits, “we have high expectations about the kinds of learning our teachers should help create, yet, do not engage them in robust communities of learners that both model and support transformative learning opportunities” (p. 291).

Consequently, the CPR team engaged in pedagogies that fostered learning exchange axioms by honoring the wisdom of people and place (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2016). We used these protocols: appreciative listening protocol, journey lines, digital engagement and logic model within the CPR team. The primary data collection included focus group activities with the original CPR team as well as the final CPR team comprised of Sheltered EAL and self-selected disciplinary teachers in the SEAL program at the Middle School (n=5). I then triangulated the evidence with select observations of both planning meetings (planning for learning) and classrooms (acting for learning) and follow-up semi-structured interviews along with reflective memoing by the CPR team and researcher.

PAR Cycle One was intended to gather baseline data on all of the research sub-questions: (1): To what extent can the participating SEAL middle school teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice; (2): To what extent have the CPR team grown in their understanding and leadership of culturally and linguistically responsive practices; and (3): How effectively do I use my leadership action space to support this learning work?

**PAR Cycle Two.** The second cycle of action research involved further investigation into research question one by utilizing the data from cycle one to engage the participating teachers in identifying areas for growth within their increasing understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive practice. Beginning with a “Mapping the Class” protocol to

examine the depth of knowledge and understanding of the CLD students and continuing with planning meeting and classroom observations, the data collection focused on establishing what CLRP practices were evident and not evident in order to hone in on the most value-added areas for growth which were addressed through a co-constructed Community Learning Exchange (CLE). Following the CLE, additional observations and a follow-up semi-structured interview protocol were enacted for the CPR teacher participants. The Cycle continued to involve reflection on research questions two and three as the CRP team and researcher continue to engage in our own reflection through memos and semi-structured questionnaires. In the completion of Cycle Two, we used our increasing understanding and practice to develop foundational documents to guide both our ongoing practice and the practice of teachers new to the Sheltered EAL program with the hope of transferring sustainable and scalable CLRP to an increasing number of middle school teachers.

### **Study Participants**

Supported by Guajardo et al.'s (2016) axiom that those closest to the problem are in the best position to solve it, the participants in the PAR project were those most invested in our culturally and linguistically diverse students. In the course of the diagnostic work, these persons reflected the cognitive dissonance that has been shown to precede openness to new learning (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). The dissonance surfaced over Fall 2017 due to the implementation of a co-teaching model in which the Sheltered EAL teachers worked entirely with beginning language learners as co-teachers in select disciplinary classrooms. The combination of increasing collaboration around pedagogy for CLD students and the sheer increase in numbers of culturally and diverse learners in the context led the group of teachers to actively seek increasing learning opportunities. By focusing on five participating Sheltered EAL teachers, there was potential for impact throughout the school as we looked to the

sustainability and scalability of action research as a cohesive model for reflective practice throughout the school.

From among the wider set of middle school teachers, I invited volunteers for a deep-dive case-study within the overarching action research project for the planning meeting and classroom observation/feedback and interview cycles that took place in Cycles One and Two. The volunteer teacher participants in the PAR project as a result of that invitation were two middle school disciplinary SEAL teachers and three Sheltered EAL teachers (n=5). Through using the voices, experience and practice of teachers, the intervention was focused on co-creating and enacting with the CPR team a professional learning and support model for teacher growth and development in the area of culturally and linguistically responsive practice. As Mintrop (2016) indicated, “equity-relevant designs are not done *to* people but are developed *with* people in a co-design dynamic” (p. 135).

The decision to focus at the middle school was based on the context of the school itself. The Sheltered EAL program, as of the 2017-2018 school year, stops in Grade 8; therefore, the students who enter with limited or no English ability at the middle level, must be prepared for learning entirely in mainstream classrooms beginning in Grade 9. The stakes for language learning are high. In addition, often teachers who are trained for secondary school teaching, are trained in their discipline of focus, but not necessarily in explicitly knowing, understanding, and teaching the language foundations or literacies of their particular discipline. In other words, as Bunch (2013) discusses about teachers in general, the pedagogical language knowledge of this particular group of teachers may not be at the level necessary to support the high stakes learning that is of critical importance to the students.

Initially, the more involved CPR team consisted of those in leadership roles in the middle school (principal), EAL, and Language and Literature department. Engaging them as co-practitioner researchers as learning leaders of the division – seemed only logical as well as

critical to the success of the endeavor. As the PAR project progressed, however, the major focus shifted to the five SEAL teachers while the other members – in particular RB, the Director of EAL, served as sounding boards for the results of the teacher work.

### **Data Collection Instrumentation**

We used a variety of data qualitative measures for data collection throughout the course of this participatory action research (PAR) project. Because of the cyclical and ongoing nature of the data collection and analysis, the data collection strategies emerged through the process (Creswell, 2014). As Merriam (1998) points out, "[i]n a qualitative study, the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (p. 20). However, through the activities, observations, reflections and the coding of the data, the data generated conversations among the CRP team that informed data-driven next steps (see Table 7).

**CLE Protocols as artifacts.** During PAR Cycle One and Two, the CPR team participated in protocols focused on principles and practices of CLRP (see Appendix D for an overarching table of practices). Each instance utilized a pedagogy that the CPR team determined would elicit important data for the particular learning focus identified. For example, in the initial focus group at the start of the year, I surmised that creating a community of learners in the classroom may be of particular importance. Therefore, from a focus group discussion, the CPR team selected the “Mapping the Class” pedagogy that allowed participants to experience and explore strategies for creating such a community. Each instance of the focus group enabled analysis of not only process but also products. Some protocols followed a semi-structured interview protocol and were audiotaped, others, such as the above “Mapping the Class” protocol produced written artifacts.

Table 7

*Linking Research Questions to Data Sources*

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Sub Questions	Data Source (Metrics)
To what extent can the middle school teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice?	CLE activities Analyzing the artifacts from CLE activities and reflections Planning meeting and classroom observations Semi-structured interviews
To what extent have the CPR team grown in their understanding and leadership of culturally and linguistically responsive practices?	CLE activities and self-assessments Planning meeting and classroom observation transcripts CPR reflective memos
How effectively am I using my leadership action space to support this learning work?	Memos CPR memos

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**Observations.** During the two PAR cycles, I observed participating teachers in their planning meetings and classroom setting twice for a full block of teaching (see Appendix F for the observation protocol and Appendix G for a sample observation data collection sheet.). Initially, in PAR Cycle One, the observation was focused on providing baseline data on observable CLRP practices (see Appendix D). In the second cycle of action research, the participating teacher and CPR team member further selected areas for observation based on the initial observation data. I conducted the observations using selective verbatim transcripts of the planning meetings and classroom observations in order to yield a narrative of the class that allowed for participating teachers to code the observations for elements of CLRP. The selective verbatim method of observation is the method Acheson and Gall (1992) indicate is best suited to observe effective teaching practices.

**Semi-structured interview.** At the conclusion of PAR Cycle One, the participating teachers participated in a semi-structured interview in order to elicit overall reflections on their growth as culturally and linguistically responsive practitioners (see Appendix H). As a reflective process, a semi-structured interview is more open-ended and assumes, as Merriam (1998) points out, that "individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (p. 74). By using a mix of structured and less structured questions, "[t]his format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p 74). This allows the interviewee to "explore his or her experience in detail and to reveal the many features of that experience that have an effect on the issue investigated," (Stringer, 2014, p. 105). I audio-recorded, transcribed, and stored digitally the interviews in a secure Dropbox backed up on an external hard drive secured in the researcher's locked office.

**Memos.** Ongoing reflective memo writing provided a key data collection instrument for research questions two and three. Because as Merriam (1998) points out, qualitative

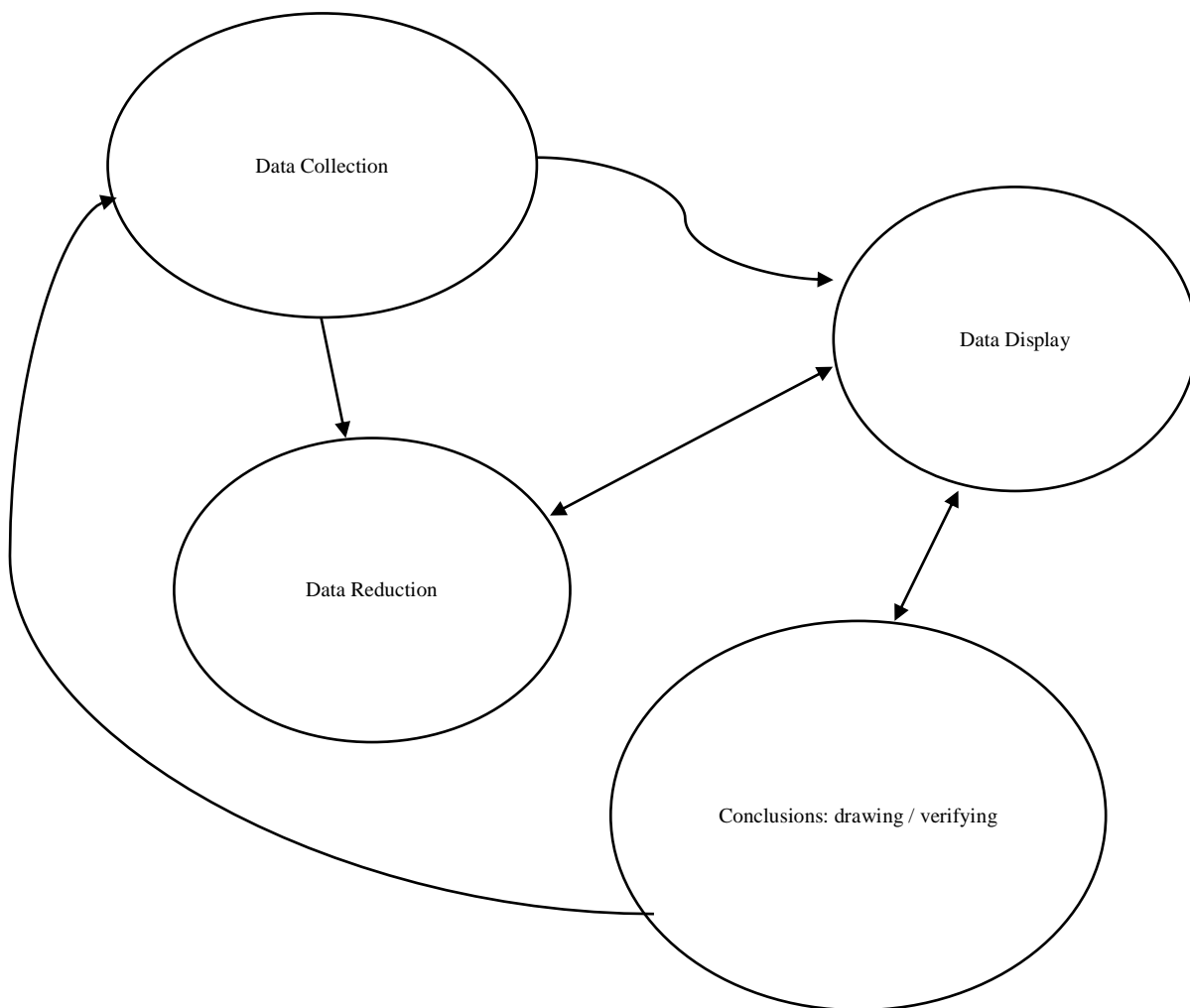


research is primarily an inductive process – meaning that the meaning is derived from the data itself, memos serve a specific and important function. Miles and Huberman (1994) posit, "They don't just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster" by pulling together disparate chunks of data into clusters that have commonalities (p. 72). Reflection is also a key learning tool and individual and collective learning is a critical component of these two research questions. The CPR team and researcher ensured that memos were dated so they were sortable which enabled easier and deeper analysis of the themes they uncover over the course of the project. The memos were intended to provide “sharp, sunlit moments of clarity or insight” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 74).

### **Data Analysis**

In participatory action research, data collection and analysis are interwoven from the start and throughout the process. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe the data analysis model as “interactive, iterative, and cyclical” in order to engender the recursive inductive nature that is critical to qualitative research. Therefore, “[t]he researcher steadily moves among these four ‘nodes’ during data collection and then shuttles among reduction, display and conclusion drawing/verification” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12) (see Figure 9).

As each piece of data was collected, I transcribed the data in order to display it in a way that allowed for initial reading and coding in a timely manner. “Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Using the CLRP framework, I created a list of initial codes; however, in accordance with the inductive analysis approach, it was important to remain open to additional units of meaning that emerged from the data. Concurrently, as the action research project unfolded, it became an iterative process to determine if the data continued to reflect the initial codes or additional areas for consideration emerged. As data were coded, patterns emerged that resulted in categories of grouping data into emerging themes (Miles et



*Note.* (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12).

*Figure 9.* Components of data analysis: Interactive model.

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al., 2016). As I moved through the first-coding for meaning-making into pattern coding, I share the emerging codes and patterns with the CPR team.

The array of data – CLE artifacts, observations/transcriptions, semi-structured interviews and memos—enabled ongoing validation of the accuracy of the findings by affording several data points for triangulation for each of the research questions. As Creswell (2014) discusses, researchers need to actively include strategies to validate research findings in qualitative research. Herr and Anderson (2015) define internal validity as “the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data” (p. 62). Therefore, as a critical part of the analysis, I shared themes and findings in an ongoing, iterative way with participants and the CPR team to give them the opportunity to validate the conclusions reached through peer debriefing and member checking (Cresswell, 2014).

### **Role of Reflection/Praxis**

Herr and Anderson (2015) posit five goals of action research. These goals include knowledge generation, achieving the action outcomes that are the focus of practice, participant and researcher learning, and results that are relevant to the context. Each of the goals demands validity that is grounded in ongoing praxis – or interplay between reflection and action on the part of researcher, CPR team, and participants (Freire, 2000). They indicate, “[t]he most powerful action research studies are those in which the researchers recount a spiraling change in their own and their participants’ understandings” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 69) that produce generative themes that become useful evidence to inform changes in practice. With this in mind, praxis was a key methodology because, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, it was the evidence from the coding of teacher planning meetings and classroom observations that led to teacher change. Only through the ongoing and deep connections between action, evidence, and reflection do the cycles of action research build on one another

and, ultimately, achieve action outcomes that “resonate with a community of practice” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 70).

As such, ongoing memoing as well as regular and systematic sharing of our reflections collaboratively framed and reframed our actions. I included the ECU coach as a critical friend in the process, which provided an important outside touchpoint for probing questions that pushed our thinking.

### **Study Limitations**

As with any participatory action research (PAR) project, there were limitations. In this section, I discuss the potential for subjectivity as well as context limitations and the power differential.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

One way to control for bias is to admit one’s biases in order to maintain awareness and continually self-check. As the Director of Curriculum and Assessment (including professional learning) at Hayward, there are definitely high professional stakes in the identified focus of practice. As someone whose job it is to provide evidence of high-quality student learning in a competitive market, I was deeply invested in achieving positive outcomes in the research. I continued to self-check any urge I had to take control of the direction of the research due to the personal and professional investment. I regularly sought feedback from the CPR team. In addition, I came to this research with perspectives drawn from many years in education, the last twenty-four in international schools and the last twelve as an administrator. I had ideals of what it means to be a committed, reflective practitioner and international educator and needed to be aware that others have, perhaps, different perspectives that need to be considered. I recognized that in my years outside of the classroom, the role of the effective classroom teacher has become more and more complex;

yet, I have not experienced that complexity personally in the role of the teacher and that may result in unrealistic expectations for commitment and change.

Enlisting committed Sheltered EAL teachers as study participants was an important element for engaging in ongoing critical feedback that grounded the research in the lives of the practitioners. Ensuring checks and balances were in place at key points as the research unfolds through practices suggested by Creswell (2014) was helpful. I utilized several data sources or perspectives for triangulation, engaged in member checking to check for accuracy of findings and peer debriefing, and, of course, I cross-checked the coding of data. With these safeguards in place, I was able to provide the research team with increased assurance of reliability and validity within the context under study.

### **Context Limitations**

The study took place in one international school in a unique setting and in one division (middle school) with only three disciplinary departments (EAL, Language and Literature and Individuals and Societies). In successfully addressing the focus of practice with these particular areas, the results could support us in developing knowledge and understanding for transferring these practices across disciplines and throughout the school. As well, the processes we used are transferable to multiple school contexts. However, by beginning the focus with the departments and with teachers already versed in the teaching of literacy and language, transferability may be limited.

### **Power Differential**

Another limitation of this study is the power differential between the researcher and CPR team. Building a democratic learning community in which all participate as equals was important to ensure full and honest participation and reciprocal praxis. The politics of the school itself or the parent company that owns the school may have, at any time, intervened to set directions beyond the researcher's control and limit the ability of the research team to use

their reflections in combination with the research evidence to plan and enact corresponding cycles of action research. This last consideration, combined with the dramatic demographic changes described in Chapter 3, added a limitation to the study. I discuss that in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a summary of the theory of action for exploring how we could build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. With each cycle of the PAR project, the CPR team and I sought to engage ourselves in inquiry and action designed to support our evolving understanding and practice of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy and leadership to sustain the learning work. As we did so, we rigorously engaged in data collection and analysis in order to ensure data-driven dialogue drove next steps. In this way, we modeled rich data-driven decision-making and supported changes in CLRP practice that have the potential for moving the school toward more equitable learning for all. In the next chapter, I describe the process and findings of the first cycle of participatory action research.

## **CHAPTER 5: CYCLE ONE**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present participatory action research (PAR) Cycle One in four sections: (1) an overview of the processes and activities of the PAR cycle; (2) an analytical narrative that describes emerging findings generated from the data; (3) a discussion of implications and how emerging findings relate to the research questions, literature and the theory of action; and (4) a brief discussion of how these implications informed the next action research cycle. In this cycle, I further explored the complexities of the organizational context to better identify the most significant access points in which to anchor further research cycles. At this point in the research, two significant findings emerged: the level of linguistic and cultural responsiveness in classrooms and the overarching learning culture and structures of the school that are hindering full-scale, respectful inclusion of our diverse learners.

### **Participatory Action Research Cycle One Activities**

As I began to implement the PAR project, the implementation needed to be flexible and respond to the context. One obvious reason for attention to flexibility was that the project was rooted in the middle school, which was onboarding a new principal and in the throes of establishing itself as a distinct division for the first time in the school's history. As a result, significant changes were afoot with teachers adapting to new leadership and new leadership establishing itself. Further, due to the growth in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) department, as well as the teacher turnover and growth in general, there were many new teachers (n=7/13) in the EAL and Language and Literature departments, which were the initial focus for the PAR, each of whom was grappling with a new country, new school, and new teaching assignment. Therefore, from the start, a slow but steady introduction and evolution of the PAR project was necessary.

The first action in early September 2017 was to prepare a synthesis of research on the elements of culturally and linguistically responsive practice and meet individually with the proposed CPR team members to share the background and trajectory of the planned research activities for PAR Cycle One. The goal in meeting with each of them individually was to ensure the communication was intimate enough to create a safe space for them to make suggestions with regard to the research design and pacing as well as express any concerns they might have about it.

From these meetings, several adult perspectives were clear – all of these differences in perspective and levels of understanding influenced PAR Cycle One. RB, the Director of EAL, was deeply committed to the project as she saw it as a robust extension of her position with corresponding support to bring these important elements of instruction to the forefront. However, she, too, was in a position that was evolving (moving from a head of department to a directorship) and expanding with 473 students on her rosters and fourteen new teachers across the school and trying to work with new data and tech systems to ensure the placement of new and returning students in the appropriate support tier.

SK, the new middle school principal, did not initially express enthusiasm in her support of the project or her place within it. Given that she was new to Singapore, new to Hayward, new to the principalship and felt the weight of expectations for the establishment of a new, robust middle-level learning division and program, the response was understandable. Nevertheless, she initially accepted the invitation to be part of the CPR team. In my memo dated September 5, the reflections indicated that from the start, “I sense it will be important for her to see herself with ownership in it and its connectedness to other initiatives that she is wanting to introduce or evolve”. This was realized over the course of the semester, as it became clear that the research synthesis and CLRP framework became important for other initiatives within the division – including that of conducting focused walk-throughs with her



heads of department (HODs) to look for visible indicators of building caring communities of learners.

Finally, MR, the head of department (HOD) for English in the middle school, was consulted. As a young full-time teacher, HOD, and someone who was currently undertaking a multicultural master's degree program, she expressed concern about the amount of time and/or tasks that her participation would require. This concern remained throughout the project; however, she remained committed to the students and to evolving her own practice with them. The project appeared to be the primary driver for her as she hoped to continue to evolve the new curriculum framework to reflect increasing cultural responsiveness through the use of a workshop model and increasingly diverse texts.

These initial individual meetings with the expected CPR team were an important element for personal connection with each of the original CPR members and to set the stage for the first formal CPR meeting. See Appendix J for an overview of all of the research activities that took place from September 2017 to December 2017. These included the administrators above and teachers; however, by the end of this cycle, it also became clear that working directly with teachers with modest involvement of the administrators would constitute the crux of the research.

Over the course of PAR Cycle One, I emphasized meeting with the CPR team as a whole as well as individually with the middle school Principal and Director of EAL as needed to support their individual activities connected to the CLRP focus (e.g., HOD walkthroughs initiated by the Principal and the professional learning activities that the Director conducted with her team and in divisions). The intention of the meetings was to create a cohesive team dynamic. As SK expressed in her reflective memo of November 6, the cohesion is starting to occur: "Regarding this team, we made a major step forward at the last

meeting with the depth of discussion and breadth of awareness. We are really gelling and appreciative of the dimensions and perspectives each of us brings.”

Another critical part of the cycle was the various conversations with the teaching faculty to introduce and interact with them about linguistically and culturally responsive practice. The activities ranged from a workshop during orientation (not mandatory, but by invitation), which approximately 60 teachers attended, to meetings with specific interest groups [e.g., the Language and Literature faculty as well as the Sheltered EAL (SEAL) and the Mainstream EAL (MEAL) teachers] to formally invite their participation in the research, to the planning and engagement of a community learning exchange with all of the SEAL and MEAL teachers at the middle school.

The process was painstakingly slow in many ways due to the need to schedule the activities within the myriad of other activities that mark the start of the school year. The meetings were critical to exposing a variety of teachers at the school to the concepts inherent in, in particular, culturally responsive practice, as well as to explore where the most promising access points lay within the people and place to engender authentic participation. Within this complex environment, if I wanted the project to truly take root and genuinely make a difference in the learning and lives of students and teachers, the pace, combined with patience and persistence, was necessary in order to co-construct a pathway forward. PAR Cycle One focused on empowerment, buy-in and shifts – in thinking, acting, relationships and research that held hope for shifting the school in the direction of being artful, reflective and adaptive practitioners.

Over the course of three months, a genuine, focused dialogue about our culturally and linguistically diverse learner population emerged as we discussed the ways in which we were, and were not, meeting their needs. And, even more importantly, a significant group of adults – administrators and teachers – committed themselves at this point in the research to examine

the mindsets, practices and structures that would increase our nimbleness in responding to the growing group of CLD learners.

### **Emerging Findings**

“Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.” --Rita Pierson, Educator of 40 years

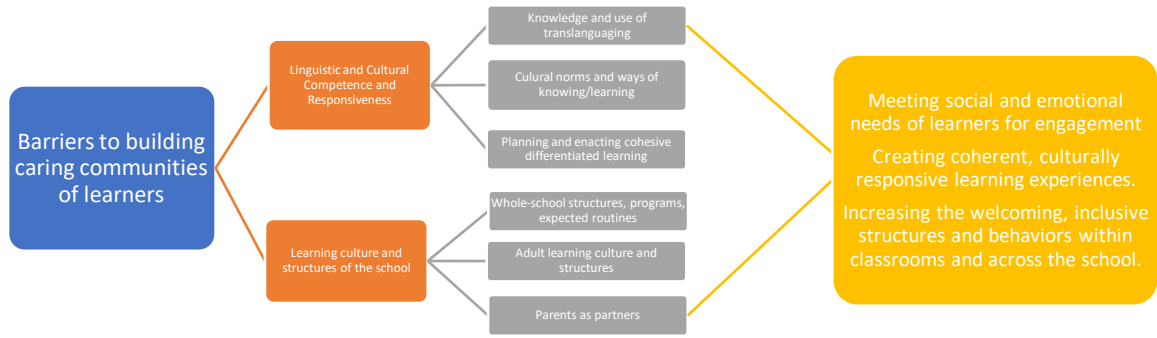
Over the course of PAR Cycle One as described above, two findings emerged from the overall central goal of *creating caring communities of learners*:

1. In order to be fully linguistically and culturally competent, we needed to be more responsive in knowing and understanding the cultural, language and learning funds of knowledge that students bring to the class; as a result of deeper knowledge of students, teachers can plan for and enact responsive, differentiated teaching.
2. The organizational structures and the adult learning culture impede the progress of changing the learning cultures and structures to promote linguistic and cultural competence.

In this section, I discuss the emerging themes through connections with specific data that were collected throughout the PAR cycle (see Figure 10).

### **Low Levels of Linguistic and Cultural Competence and Responsiveness**

One emergent finding that affected the level of building caring communities of learners in the classroom was the low levels of linguistic and cultural competence and responsiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom – including, with language learners, clear routines and protocols for using translanguageing to support high quality learning. Translanguageing, or the “flexible (yet purposeful) use of their linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds” (Celic & Seltzer, 2011, p. 1), is an important pedagogical strategy with emerging bilingual students. Teachers’ level of



*Figure 10. Emerging findings.*

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knowledge about translanguaging, cultural norms, the knowledge of cultural ways of knowing and learning and the use of all these in order to plan for cohesive, differentiated high quality learning affect student learning. Because of the uneven knowledge of teachers about language and culture, the gaps in teacher knowledge tended to inhibit teachers from consistently responding to the social-emotional needs *of* the students and setting coherent learning expectations *for* the students. Both the knowledge and understanding of teachers and the leadership thereof was questioned: “Who in this school trains teachers to become better with their students?” (CM, October 16, 2017). I discuss the evidence of practices of building caring communities of learners as well as practices that engender a sense of belonging for CLD students.

**Building caring communities of learners.** One important element of building caring communities of diverse learners is setting the tone for respectful, supportive and caring interactions to build the relationships that form the basis for demanding engagement and effort toward learning. While there was ample evidence through classroom observations in the PAR research cycle of caring interactions, there was little evidence of including students’ mother tongues to translate vocabulary words, of going beyond building relationships to purposefully using translanguaging, or cultural norms or ways of learning to support high quality learning.

During the course of the initial classroom observations that took place in all four of the disciplinary Sheltered EAL (SEAL) classes (Math, English, Humanities and Science), a number of specific instances of respectful, caring interactions were evident in all classrooms but one, a general atmosphere of warmth – among the students and between students and teachers. In science class, the teacher was quick to highlight the performance of one of the students in the previous night’s concert and two others on their championship jump-roping ability. In English class, of all Mandarin speakers, the teacher asked the students for the

Chinese translations of the words she was explaining in English and then made the effort to pronounce and use the Chinese words in the next sentence of explanation – the students clapped for her. Further use of a variety of student mother tongues (Ukrainian, Japanese, Chinese) to translate significant vocabulary words was used in the Humanities class. In another class, the teacher invited Brian, a boy who had not yet spoken, to practice answering a question in front of the whole class and supported him in doing so through gestures and pointing to visuals; when he finished, the students clapped for him. In another instance, every individual student was greeted at the door with a “Good Afternoon” followed by his or her name and they respectfully repeated the greeting. Yet, when the group of Mandarin students moved on to another class, they were repeatedly asked to stop speaking Mandarin (twelve times in the course of an hour) and threatened with staying after class if they didn’t comply.

Needless to say, these different approaches send conflicting messages about how and when students’ mother tongues are used to enrich learning; further, there was no evidence within any of the classes observed to date to help students use translanguaging in effective ways for deeper learning, while being stretched in their use of English to interact socially and for academic purposes. In one class, the teacher gently indicated, “H., you know enough English to speak English to your friends and then P. can listen and learn”. However, after making one remark to his friend in English, H. reverted back to Mandarin. Thus, while a great number of the interactions I witnessed within classroom were generally respectful and warm, they stopped short of providing evidence of using translanguaging as a quality mediation tool for deeper learning or of capitalizing on the relationships to demand culturally responsive attention to high quality learning – critical to building a caring community of *learners*.

Further, in a discussion protocol with the participating SEAL teachers, they shared a number of concerns with regard to the level of cultural understanding that Hayward teachers

exhibit in order to support the diverse students as engaged learners. CM's comment revealed the concern:

Teachers (need) some cultural understanding. The first week I noticed teachers touching the top of their heads and pointing at something and telling them to 'look at my eyes when I speak to you' and just a lot of that from the very beginning can make the child shut down from the get-go. So, creating an environment that's safe for all the kids from different backgrounds (discussion protocol, October 16, 2017).

This was echoed by RB when reflecting on the experience of this last semester: "To be honest, I've become more aware of how many teachers do not recognize/consider or want to recognize/consider that all of their students come from diverse backgrounds" (CPR reflection, November 6, 2017). It should be noted, however, that RB's comment refers to the whole of the middle school as opposed to the specific SEAL classes being focused on here. Nevertheless, as I have indicated, even within SEAL classes, little evidence suggested that the cultural or linguistic diversity of students was used to impact the learning itself.

However, and, in direct conflict to the evidence from classrooms, teachers did express a commitment to the social-emotional lives of students. In a community learning exchange held with all the Sheltered EAL and Mainstream EAL teachers at the middle level on November 10, 2017, six of the thirteen participating teachers indicated that the highest need was for a commitment to the social-emotional needs of students. Evidence of these commitments include these statements: "My commitment to my student is to raise his self-esteem." and, "Develop a plan to assist A. with social and emotional issues." As was indicated by CM, "they need a lot of emotional support. It's a new country, a new culture, a new language and they hear it all day, so they're tired and stressed" (October 16, 2017). These comments circle back to the initial CPR team meeting on September 17 in which the team expressed these hopes and dreams for the CLRP work in the school revolved by naming that students should be cared for, valued, connected and excited to be part of the school community (CPR reflection #1, September 13, 2017). But this shift required emotional

connections and output on the part of all the adults who work with students as well as an understanding of how to use cultural funds of language, knowledge and learning that students bring to classroom and that should drive high quality engagement and learning (Moll et al., 1992).

The three Sheltered EAL (SEAL) teachers who came forward to formally participate in the research were teachers who had personal connections that stem from their backgrounds of growing up and initial teaching experiences with culturally and linguistically diverse students. This connection, however, is not necessarily surprising. As Ladson-Billings (2014) emphasizes, culturally responsive practice has to emanate from the minds and hearts of reflective practitioners. In the initial group discussion on October 16, 2018 with the CPR team members who were Sheltered EAL teachers, the connection to a calling of mind and heart became evident:

CM: I am a native English speaker, but I grew up in a diverse community – mostly Spanish-speaking migrant community. So, I was surrounded by migrant workers . . . that’s why I started teaching in the migrant community, and so I really enjoyed working with (that) population.

NB: I’ve always had multilingual students in my classes. Most of them escaping their country for political reasons or economic reasons . . . (I’ve) been there, (I’ve) experienced it more than once . . . I remember one year in Florida, I taught my actual lessons in four languages because I had students who were just dropped into class in the middle of the school year and they were glossy-eyed, some crying, some frightened by the new system . . .

DC: Growing up in a very diverse multicultural area . . . I saw a lot of misconceptions that sometimes if people couldn’t express themselves in a local language or any particular language, they will seem as less intelligent, when really it was just the language barrier and the person behind that had just as valid ideas and opinions, but they just didn’t have the tools to get them out.

An asset at Hayward that we can capitalize on is the experience of educators who truly feel a heartfelt connection to the CLD students because of their personal background experiences and thus possess the mindfulness of a reflective practitioner committed to the success of these students.



The other two disciplinary Sheltered teachers who formally decided to participate are teachers with backgrounds that lend themselves to personal connection, understanding, and empathy – MR, from the Philippines, who is a second-language English speaker and PB, from Australia, who has background in working with the aboriginal population of Australia and is currently working on a master’s thesis focused on aboriginal transition to boarding schools. Perhaps, personal, social-emotional connections may be a precursor to having the desire to commit to deeper learning and practice in creating diverse, caring communities of *learners*?

**Sense of belonging.** I explored the emergent finding of linguistic and cultural competence and responsiveness in the discussion protocol with the three participating SEAL teachers; they indicated that they observed a growing divide in two areas: the sense of the belonging that students felt in the classroom and the academic learning of the students whose natural learning culture does not match that of Hayward. This observation perhaps points to a disconnect between the teachers’ understanding the learning culture of the students and the students’ understanding the learning culture of Hayward. We somehow were not providing a bridge to ensure students can capitalize on their learning assets while being introduced to the dominant learning culture of the school. Comments in the structured discussion on October 16, 2018 such as DC’s elaboration provided insight:

There are very, very different approaches to things and particularly for the students’ ways of learning. Some of them come from quite a passive, rote memory-based background; some of them are very active and involved and those students tend to dominate in the system and the quiet ones can get left behind or feel like they’re doing something wrong.

CM confirmed this when she indicated that the level of student passivity was having a significant impact on their engagement and, thus, achievement. In giving a particular example of further different cultural understandings impacting learning, DC cited plagiarism. The cultural perception that this is a positive, helping behavior is common “I found the

answer, I'll share it with you, we'll submit the same, and we'll pass together" as opposed to a grievous offense. Thus, cultural respect in CRP that support caring communities of learners not only encompasses cultural norms and understanding, but also exploration of the learning culture of students in order to leverage learning systems of culturally diverse students. The idea that culturally responsive teaching is a "mindset, a way of thinking about and organizing instruction to allow for great flexibility in teaching" (Hammond, 2015, p. 5).

Linguistic and cultural competence and responsiveness is of great importance. While the majority of the teachers working with Hayward's diverse beginning language learners engaged them in warm interactions, there was room for growth in utilizing the fruits of those relationships and the growing understanding of linguistic and cultural funds that the students bring with them to push high quality learning within the community of learners. This finding emerged as a space for teacher reflection. The second theme that emerged was the learning structures and culture of the school; analysis of this theme provided some insight into the roadblocks that may be contributing to lack of knowledge and responsiveness discussed above.

### **Learning Structures and Culture of the School**

The learning structures and culture of Hayward developed as a result of decision-making structures, leadership styles, and incredible growth and change. In the case of the PAR project, the top-down, economically-driven decision to add the SEAL program in January 2016 without corresponding structures and resources to ensure inclusion and high-quality learning left a lingering lack of trust and uncertainty. Evidence emerged from dialogue about observation protocols and the co-teaching model; as well, the whole-school structures, norms and expectations that did not necessarily meet the increasingly complex needs of the teachers, learners or parents.

**Observation protocols.** A key illustration of the Hayward culture during PAR Cycle One came from a meeting with middle school HODs in a discussion about the use of an observation sheet for classroom visits, which was purportedly designed to support the collection of visible evidence of building caring communities of learners. During the course of that meeting, when asked to respond to questions about CLRP, the seven persons who attended posed eight questions, but not one of them was actually about the substance of CLRP. All of the questions were about the structure and responsibility for the observations including the wondering of whether it would be part of the formal teacher evaluation process. In my October 4 memo following this meeting, my reflections indicated: “I paraphrased, ‘What I am hearing is that there are a lot of concerns about your role in observing your department members and what that looks like?’” There was overarching agreement. I further mused, “I sensed there was an uncomfortableness in the room with regard to it all”. Although I suspected some of this was because of the terminology used (e.g., ‘observation’ which carries with it a sense of evaluation and judgement), the concerns and questions represented an increasing sense of overwhelm rather than a positive response about how we might collectively inquire into the possibilities for growth. The general feeling of overwhelm among a mostly new and young faculty faced with increasingly complex roles might indicate the lack of a well-developed sense of their wisdom of practice or system for professional learning.

In debriefing the HOD meeting during a CPR meeting, the principal commented, “I just wanted to see good practice. And it’s not you giving a recipe, not giving a formula for it, but it sounds like the teachers are going to be much more comfortable with a formula” (CPR meeting minutes, October 16, 2017, p. 10). Of course, if we reverted to this, it would serve to reinforce top-down decision-making and leadership structures. Our rush to tell them what to do would not support a change in teachers’ sense of efficacy in becoming more nimble

adaptive practitioners engaged in cycles of inquiry for their own professional learning and the learning of their students. As a result, I had deep concerns at this point about how to move the work forward.

**Modeling.** Further evidence from the middle school as to a lack of efficacy came from the HOD meeting when they were asked how we could build the capacity of teachers to improve learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse; the number one answer was ‘modeling’ what we would like to see. In the SEAL teacher discussion protocol, NB indicated, “I definitely wish that someone had shown me what a co-teaching moment looks like . . . I want someone to tell me, ‘You’re doing this the right way’ or ‘You’re doing this the wrong way’”. SK, the principal, who in reflecting on a recent interaction with a faculty member stated, “I believe it’s also part of the culture of the school that people want to do everything right, but instinctively don’t necessarily know it’s right, so we want to be told ‘this is the right way to do it’”. Going a step farther when discussing a differentiated homework conversation with another teacher, SK mused that it is in the “one-to-one discussions that the real message can be implemented . . . unless specific examples for each student were given she wouldn’t have known what to do”.

The question became: Should professional learning be embedded into the context of the classroom or would we decide to have an explicit model on how we would train teachers? The question is situated within a significant thread of Russ, Sherin and Sherin’s (2016) theory about observations of teacher practice. They contend that the situative and sociocultural perspective of teacher learning is best based in interactive and context-specific ways – within classrooms, within their departments, and within their schools and not from observations that report what teachers should do. The question brings to mind Gay’s (2013) response when asked to identify specific classroom practices for culturally diverse students, “How could I recommend practices that would somehow be appropriate for “all” classrooms yet adhere to

one of the core tenets of culturally responsive teaching, namely, to respect and respond to the particular diversities in each classroom” (p. 63). One cannot become an adaptive, reflective practitioner if one is not consistently reflecting on the teaching moves one makes in a particular classroom and the success or lack thereof of them with particular students. A move toward becoming a reflective practitioner based on the dynamic social environment of the classroom, however, required a major shift in the school culture and a more systematic approach to leading and supporting the learning of our faculty by meeting them where they are as learners in order to move them forward.

### **Whole School Structures, Norms and Expectations**

Finally, the learning cultures and structures of the school seemed as if they would impede the genuine development of caring communities of learners due to the norms and clarity of expectations that were held for supporting students. Some potential barriers included the segregation of class composition, cultural perspectives, building adult relationships for co-teaching, and parental involvement.

**Segregation in class composition.** With the best of intentions about supporting students, we often segregate students in ways that result in inadequate support for learning. The practice of exclusive classrooms for language learners through a SEAL program that keeps all the beginning language learners together for at least 50% of their day is a major structural barrier to sociocultural integration or inclusion. The separation is further compounded when the SEAL classes are homogeneous – such is the case this year with the Grade 8 SEAL class of twenty Chinese students. Another school-wide structure, or lack there-of, that impedes an inclusive atmosphere is the lack of attention to help these students transition into the learning culture “The Hayward Way” while honoring the learning culture they bring with them.

**Cultural perspectives.** Further, we did not overtly consider how cultural perspectives could or should play a role in school routines and celebrations such as award and class assemblies and co-curricular activity offerings. Many of these revolved around decidedly North-American traditions such as honor roll and dean's list and pep rallies for western team sports such as basketball and rugby. The nod to cultural traditions and celebrations is primarily seen through public holidays celebrated by Singapore (such as Deepavali) and the annual International Festival that includes costume parades and international foods and cultural presentations; however, heroes and holidays are only a baby step in moving toward a multicultural environment (Banks, 1990). During the community learning exchange held on November 10, 2017 with both the Sheltered and Mainstream EAL teachers, these aspects came *strongly* to light: consistent actions and words that point to a deep value of diversity should underpin the overarching structures and programs of Hayward. However, the participants expressed a concern that until the school truly communicates – through words and deeds – that valuing diversity and inclusion is a priority and drives what we do, that their work is but a band-aid within an organization and among colleagues that do not truly buy in.

**Building adult relationships for co-teaching.** Another structure that impeded building communities of learners in the classroom was the difficulty the adults in the classrooms are having in building their own relationships as learning partners to support one another in order to cohesively support the students as learners. The lack of relationship and co-planning showed up primarily in the disjointed nature of the co-teaching that occurred in the SEAL classrooms during PAR Cycle One. For example, in two out of the four observations of the SEAL classrooms, the Sheltered EAL teacher planned the introductory activity separate from the co-teacher, resulting in a sense of urgency to complete the introductory activity in order to get to the lesson planned by the teacher. In one such class, the students were given approximately ten minutes to draw four or five figures in their

notebook. During the course of that time, the SEAL teacher gave seven reminders connected to increasing their pace of work.

Further, in both of the observations mentioned, there was a mismatch between the content of the introductory activity and the content of the remainder of the lesson that led to difficulty in the cohesion of learning for the participating learners. In the aforementioned example, the content objective dealt with learning new vocabulary words for math (although one could wonder whether in a Grade 8 math lesson, learning six new vocabulary words in an 80-minute block is an example of high academic expectations for all students – also an element of building caring communities of learners), and the introductory lesson was drawing solid figures which were not even named nor referred back to in the remainder of the lesson. In another such lesson, also Grade 8, there were two seemingly unrelated objectives; one objective was to learn to write simple sentences and another to discuss the main idea of an article. In this lesson, the introductory activity was the reading of a passage about bones and underlining the subject and predicate – only the article contained many other sentence patterns beyond simple sentences – and the introductory activity went on for 40 minutes.

The comment at the end of this activity was, “We will stop here today so we can continue with Ms. R’s lesson”. In the remainder of the lesson, the teacher and students reviewed leads of articles, discussed on extra information in articles, watched a video on the harmful effects of smoking as a scaffold to understanding how to analyze an article for the main idea, and, finally, the students returned, in groups, to their inverted pyramids and a Mayan article to fill out the *Extra Information* section using complete sentences. Only five students were writing and there was no check as to whether they were, indeed, writing complete, simple sentences. Clearly each teacher was individually trying to do his or her best, but, absent co-planning, the co-teaching model was disjointed.

In understanding the complexities of building caring communities of diverse learners, setting the tone and routines for respectful, caring interactions is one such element; however, another element is the focus on *learning* or setting and planning cohesively to support high academic expectations for the students. In a co-teaching classroom, the learning is mediated by the quality of planning, focus and interaction between and among the facilitators of that learning. At this point, the necessary structures to support significant, protected collaborative planning time were not in place. For example, during the course of the PAR cycle, the homogenous nature of the Grade 8 class (all Mandarin speakers) was posing far more significant management and learning challenge than the Grade 6 and 7 classes which had, respectively, five and six different nationalities and languages represented. Yet, the Grade 8 teachers had no common time to share ideas about structures and processes that could benefit teacher efficacy or student learning and well-being.

As the SEAL teachers, in a discussion protocol indicated, both time, “Finding the time to plan . . . finding the time to work with each other and find out what works would be helpful” (CM, October 16, 2017, p. 4) as well as the challenge of negotiating roles with multiple co-teachers “ . . . quickly changing between very different teaching styles to try and adapt to the role with different people” (DC, October, 16, 2017, p. 5) play a significant role in creating community focused on interdependently supporting quality learning. In only two of the classes did the Sheltered EAL teacher contributed to the lesson by facilitating an activity; yet, the two classes posed a problem in terms of the coherence of the whole lesson. Following the introductory activities and in the whole of the other classes, the Sheltered EAL teachers followed a pattern of inconsistent teaching interjections and interactions with individuals or pairs of students to coach the learning work. The teachers offered another caring adult in the classroom, but how they were significantly contributing to the teaching and learning was not



clear. The current situation was referred to by NB as “walking on eggshells”, which was met with nods of agreement from the other two SEAL teachers.

**Parental involvement.** A related roadblock to building communities of learners in classrooms is that of building a community of learners that encompasses parents – in other words, ongoing dialogue and inclusion of parents in learning. Over the course of the research cycle there were two community/parent information sessions on learning at Hayward in the SEAL and MEAL programs, but a plethora of comments during the CPR meeting and reflection times indicates the need for further inclusion of parents in the learning conversations. RB echoed this need several times over the course of the semester in her CLRP reflections: “There is a need to look at more specific parent group work” (October 3) and “Next steps – work with parents!” (November 6). In addition, MR expressed at the start of the cycle that she believed the “most value-added element of CLRP is going to be the communication to and inclusion of parents” (September 13) and added in November: “How can our SEAL students/parents or students/parents who speak multiple languages become active participants in school activities?” Yet, the lack of parental involvement stems in part by what MR forwards – the increasing number of languages present in the community with lack of corresponding structures for translation – and also, perhaps by the lack of understanding of the learning culture of Hayward and, certainly, by the increasing number of guardianship arrangements.

We explored the lack of understanding of the Hayward learning culture and expectations in the CLE on November 10 among the SEAL and MEAL teachers. During our deliberation, we wondered whether our diverse student and parent community understood our stance as an IB school: we view the role of a teacher and the role of the school to be both knowing and growing students as good, well-rounded people and citizens of the world as well as learners through high quality academic programs and achievement. But do our parents

understand this? This analysis supported how confused we were about how to address the vision; this was not only an issue for our diverse student and parent body, but also among our teachers. Clarity about who and what we are and believe in and, therefore, behaviors we expect to see that reflect these beliefs on the part of all of our community members was something we needed to consider more deeply.

**Guardianship.** An added complexity beyond language that formed partnerships with parents was that of the guardianship arrangements of many of the EAL students. The level of involvement of the guardians varied vastly – with the students themselves, not to mention the school. In the discussion protocol, the three SEAL teachers expressed great concern about the growing divide among the students in the SEAL program – between those who have support at home and those who do not. As NB states, “. . . these kids are left to emotionally grow up on their own and it makes you think, you know, during the day, maybe some of them *are* giving the maximum. They can’t give you more than that” (October 16, 2017). While the school recognized the need to take on more responsibility to ensure students are in safe guardianship arrangements and hired a Safeguarding Manager charged with that, safety doesn’t necessarily mean support and involvement. It appears that it remains incumbent upon us to consider increasing ways to involve both parents and guardians as members of our community of learners committed to supporting culturally respectful belonging and high-quality learning.

### **Implications for Research Questions**

In this section, I provided an analysis of the emergent findings from PAR Cycle One that contributed to the need for growing the capacity to build inclusive, caring communities of learners focused on high quality learning. The lack of linguistic and cultural competence and responsiveness displayed in current practice and the structures and learning culture currently evident in the school impact this. Clearly, the first research cycle uncovered a

number of key issues we needed to address. In the following section, I review the implications of these findings in relation to my research questions and relevant literature. While PAR Cycle One was painstakingly slow to unfold, it nevertheless revealed a plethora of important evidence that informed the next cycle and began to address the research questions. In this section, I discuss each of the research questions in turn and connect them to evidence and the relevant literature.

### **Understanding and Use of CLRP**

*RQ #1: To what extent can the middle school teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice?*

At this point in the PAR project, the emerging findings connect to much of the literature that I reviewed in Chapter 2. In considering the overarching research question, for all of the middle school teachers and even the subset of SEAL and MEAL teachers, there was wide variability in levels of efficacy, including an understanding of the practices. CLRP looks different in each classroom of learners and, certainly, the systems and structures that are in place to support them in becoming adaptive practitioners are not yet sufficient. The school message to students, adults and teachers is mixed; Gitlin et al. (2003) term our mixed message as “welcoming and unwelcoming structures and behaviors” (p. 114). While the school is dedicated to being an inclusionary school, exclusion remained the predominant structure that beginning language learners encounter as they enter the school.

In their discussion on an integrated delivery model to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, Scanlan and Lopez (2012) emphasize how sociocultural integration or the creation of a sense of belonging – academically, socially and culturally is an essential pillar of the model. Kunc (1992), further endorses this necessity: inclusive practice means “valuing of diversity within the human community (in order to) realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging”

(pp. 38-39). Genuine and authentic inclusion forms the foundation of success for CLD students (Scanlan & Lopez, 2012; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011).

It was clear from observations and discussions thus far, that was not where we were as a school. However, neither the teachers nor other members of the CPR group are the decision-makers with regard to the overall structure. Therefore, we needed to explore how we could carve out or create additional structures to increase the welcoming, inclusionary elements of the school to support the students – across the middle school. Brown-Jeffrey and Cooper (2011) state that whole school alignment matters; consistent expectations and approaches are critical for establishing a caring, inclusionary atmosphere – across classrooms and common spaces and into the community with parents and guardians.

In addition, the emerging themes point to the need to explore further the cultural and learning funds of knowledge and skill of the students in order to engage and connect them to the learning (Moll et al., 1992). As Hammond, in an interview published by Gonzalez (2017), indicates, culturally responsive teaching “is about building the learning capacity of the individual student . . . There is a focus on leveraging the affective and the cognitive scaffolding that students bring with them” (Gonzalez, 2017, p. 6). In other words, the key performance indicator as to whether your teaching is culturally responsive is “whether your diverse students – students of color, English language learners, immigrant students – are learning. If they are not succeeding academically within your classroom norms, your approach might need to be more culturally responsive” (Gonzalez, 2017, p. 6).

Finally, the emergent findings of the first PAR cycle point us to reconsider our approach to professional learning to ensure that teachers feel supported in their efforts to engage in collaborative inquiry and reflection as a powerful tool for professional learning. Timperley and Alton-Lee’s (2008) teacher inquiry model supports the importance of gaining new knowledge and skill combined with follow-up monitoring and coaching to increase self-

efficacy. Because it was still unclear what the most value-added areas were for increasing knowledge and understanding of the five teacher participants, we did not sufficiently engage in actual inquiry into areas for learning – particularly in the area of culturally responsive practice. I believed that was going to be a key focus with the teacher-participants moving forward. As I indicated in a reflective memo of October 8, 2017:

Supporting teachers in understanding what knowledge they are bringing to bear as they make decisions within their planning and classroom interaction . . . and then utilizing the pillars of adult learning that Drago-Severson (2009) posited – teaming, engaging in collegial inquiry and mentoring – to support understanding, practice and, ultimately the development of wise, adaptive practitioners.

With the agreement now of five teacher participants who all work together in a co-teaching model to participate, there was a stronger opportunity to make significant strides in this area.

In addition, in moving forward with the Sheltered EAL teachers, we would be able to capitalize on what they indicated was one of their major assets during our discussion protocol – that of their team. As CM forwarded in the discussion protocol, “I’m just thankful that we have a team and that we are able to have one room where we can all collaborate” (October 16, 2017). By capitalizing on this asset as well as the asset of their personal connection and commitment to our diverse students, I will hope to, as Drago-Severson (2009) urges, to provide “developmentally oriented challenges (by) posing helpful questions and/or offering an alternative perspective to push gently at the edges of (their) thinking and feeling to foster new ways of thinking and feeling. I refer to this as standing at the edges of someone’s thinking (and feeling)” (p. 54).

The steps forward would need to support, in a more focused and structured way, my original theory of action. I originally hypothesized that if we could involve teachers and teacher-leaders closest to the focus of practice and engage them deeply as subjects in examining culturally and linguistically responsive practice, then we could enact and sustain improved practice which potentially would link to student learning. I determined at this point

in the research that one of the most important levers during PAR Cycle Two was the inclusion and voice of the teacher participants from the beginning of the cycle.

### **Leadership Growth: CPR Team**

*RQ #2: To what extent have the CPR team grown in their understanding and leadership of culturally and linguistically diverse populations and practices?*

The evidence suggested that the CPR team grew in understanding of the context and in the level of persistence with which we needed to approach our collective learning work in order to support increased understanding and adaptive practice in teachers. The team reflections provided a strong interest in building knowledge and skill. SK, the principal, indicated her appreciation for the increasing awareness of CLRP through participation in the group and how that awareness was heightening her ability to invite increasing considerations of cultural and linguistic responsiveness when she was observing in visiting classrooms. In her visit to the design classroom where students were exploring playgrounds, for example, she invited them to consider what was cultural about playgrounds. While she admits that she is “still struggling with balancing the logistics of (her) work with program development,” she also indicated that “I look forward to the meetings and the steps we are taking . . . Being given time like this to write during our meetings demonstrates significant empathy for the crucial element of TIME needed for reflection and processing” (memo, November 6, 2017).

Further, both she and MR communicated appreciation for the focus the CLRP framework and participation in the CPR team had given them for both formal evaluations and walkthroughs. As MR indicated in email communication on November 2 after conducting walkthroughs of the department with SK looking for evidence of caring, communities of learners: “Here is the summary of our CPR visits. Thank you so much. It was a wonderful experience.” She further reflected in her memo of November 6 that her participation had given her “an opportunity to reflect on the department’s teaching practices, student learning

environment, and provide questions and feedback that could help each teacher grow and for the curriculum to evolve.” Finally, RB expressed appreciation for the framework which has given her something broader to work with her EAL team which she felt was especially important for the new teachers who, as she indicated, “are often feeling behind in understanding the culture, mindset, and pathway forward in a new school” (memo, November 6, 2017). She expressed increased commitment to use the framework more clearly in her department meeting’s PLCs and workshop presentations as a way to add richness to the work they are doing with the principles of the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol which focus strongly on linguistic responsiveness. However, by the start of PAR Cycle Two, the multiple demands of the administrative roles for the principal and other CPR members required a reorganization and refocus of the CPR group to dig deeper into classroom practice.

### **Leadership Growth: Researcher**

*RQ #3: How effectively am I using my leadership action space to support this learning work?*

The first action research cycle was a challenge to my leadership capabilities. While some of the principles and skills of community-based learning and action have long been a part of what I believe in and the ways I try operate, it was a struggle for me to adapt to the ever-shifting sands of PAR and still feel as if I was providing leadership. The dilemma became clear in my internship log on September 20 when I actually logged 20 minutes of worry time, “Fretting about whether this was all going to work. Pulled a few hairs out.” This was followed by a serious call-out to my supervisor and a Skype conversation. As a follow-up email from my mentor indicated: “you are used to doing things so well, that when something does not quite work out the way you had it in your mind, I think you might think you missed something or did not do this the right way” (L. Tredway, personal email communication, November 17, 2017). My learning to relax in a place of uncertainty and still

provide some structure and focus while evolving to suit the people and context involved has been a significant opportunity and challenge for me this cycle. As I memoed on October 1 when considering my leadership goals for the cycle: “To be sure, this work is stretching my leadership capabilities . . .”, Dewey (1938) comes to mind, ‘The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction’” (p. 58). In a memo (October 1, 2017), I said: “To learn to live in the space between my understanding of CLRP . . . and the space of the CPR team and their desire to leverage control or steer the next steps will be a valuable space as I learn more deeply how to facilitate, guide, scaffold and put ideas on the table”.

The reflective memos of the CPR team of November 6 referred provided evidence that I was able to learn to live in this space and still provide focus and structures that supported not only their growth, but the growth and leaning in of the teachers in the middle school. I looked forward to continuing that journey while additionally seeking to ensure that growing in my leadership action space continued to impact other areas of my work as well – as was reflected on in the October 30 memo: “What I am most pleased about at this point is the commitment to change I am seeing in myself and the ways this way of working are seeping into my other responsibilities and commitments.”

Yet, a gap in my leadership was the near absence of inserting a firmer knowledge-centered base into our work as well as to more concretely seek to provide feedback on some of the initiatives that came to be connected to the work (e.g., the walkthroughs of the principal and the department heads) but contained a level of misconception about the practices. For example, in the walkthroughs with the Humanities HOD when looking for visible evidence on the practice of “Multiple strategies are used to know and understand the communities of learners,” the listing of evidence contained elements such as “Student work



on the wall,” “IB Learner Profile Posters,” “MYP Criteria posted,” and “Pictures that accompany words”.

While this might be considered supporting evidence in attempting to introduce the students to the learning culture of Hayward, none of the comments provided evidence that strategies are in place to understand the learners as cultural beings and cultural learners. I needed to find ways to increasingly use my leadership action space and knowledge base to provide feedback that would grow increasingly strong research-based understanding for us all. Within the transcript of our CPR Meeting Three, coding indicated a pattern of hierarchical meaning-making statements in response to our discussion in order to insert research-based knowledge. One example was my insertion about the research on classroom walkthroughs (Grissom, Loeb, & Masters, 2013): if we do not use walkthroughs as a chance to have conversations with teachers, we lose the impact on teachers’ professional learning, and the walkthrough can actually have a negative impact on practice and student learning. Yet, as is seen in the above example for the Humanities walkthroughs that may, indeed, be what was happening. Not that the visual displays mentioned are evidence of bad practice, but they are not sufficient evidence of the practices that matter. Looking for ways to grow in my leadership ability to interject an increasing knowledge base as well as using my knowledge base and growing my skills in giving effective feedback needed to be a focus for me in PAR Cycle Two.

Finally, I was pleased to be able to engender the trust and consent for participation of five middle school teachers in the project moving forward. My fear from the beginning of the project – as is seen in my memo of September 5, “I see the teacher participation with observation and coaching as incredibly important, but I am wondering and nervous about whether I’ll have invested volunteers in this aspect of the research” – was the fear of not being able to inspire teachers to participate. I now saw that their interest and commitment

was the most valuable part of the project, and I was highly committed to ensuring a high level of value for them in their involvement – in using my leadership action space to serve them well. However, due to the painstakingly slow process, I was not able to secure observations in the SEAL classes co-taught by these teachers until the week of December 4 – during which I observed four 80-minute blocks.

### **Informing Action: PAR Cycle Two**

PAR Cycle One was, as I indicated above, a cycle of exploring the context and significant players more deeply, building relationships, and consideration of the most value-added access points in which to continue. My primary direction was informed by the long-term goal of positioning Hayward as a school that embraces CLRP. With what I learned in PAR Cycle One, PAR Cycle Two initially changed to encompass two parallel but equally important threads of learning work. The first thread was to work with SK, the middle school principal, and RB, the Director of EAL, to conduct a closer examination of the paradox of welcoming/unwelcoming structures and behaviors in the school that prevent Hayward from truly embracing an inclusive culture that values and celebrates our diversity as an asset. The second thread was to form a CPR group with the participating teachers to focus on building that team as a significant PLC that focuses on increasing skill and application of linguistic, cultural and learning funds of knowledge to support and demand high quality learning from our diverse students. That team was able to collect evidence and change teaching practices that had the potential for school-wide impact.

Initially, continuing to engender the participation of SK and RB was seen as important because they both expressed an appreciation for how this is helping them anchor their work and it also provided credibility for this research project. However, continuing to facilitate the original CPR group – with SK, RB and MR, the HOD – was not the most value-added way forward. In addition, because of the strong feeling that came from the CLE with

all of the SEAL and MEAL teachers at the middle school, the work of communities of learners in the classrooms needed to become more fully anchored in an increasingly responsive and inclusive school approach within the classroom. An approach that could inform the entire school in these ways: examining the expectations and space for co-planning for learning, and fully supporting the transition and, eventually, the inclusion of students; thus, infusing cultural inclusion in the wider middle school structures and routines. However, upon the advent of the new semester in January 2018, it became quickly evident that while RB would continue to be involved as an extended member of the teacher CPR team, the overarching administrative CPR group would not move forward.

Therefore, what was initially seen as the second critical thread for PAR Cycle Two, the formation of a CPR group of participating Sheltered EAL (SEAL) teachers – CM, DC and NB – with PB and MR as extended members of that group, became the crux and focus of the entire PAR. Within this CPR group, we were able to use the initial observations and elements of linguistically and culturally responsive practice to provide a focus for learning, planning and teaching. The five-member CPR group participated in a focused cycle of inquiry together using the PDSA model: planning for learning (planning) acting for learning (doing), reflecting on learning (studying) and iterating for deeper learning (acting). What became clear in this process is that the PDSA cycle often needs to include multiple small cycles to plan, enact and study several elements of their practice before fully putting an action plan in place (Gillies & Boyle, 2011).

PAR Cycle One was an enlightening journey of building trusting relationships and gaining a deeper understanding of the people and place in which the PAR sat. While significant strides in evolving practice in order to move Hayward to a place of fully embracing diversity and culturally and linguistically responsive practice did not occur, the original theory of action focused on involving teachers and teacher-leaders closest to the

focus of practice and engaging them deeply as subjects in examining culturally and linguistically responsive practice, became the path down for successfully enacting and sustaining improved practice. It was precisely because those who *are closest* to the focus of practice have voluntarily stepped forward that we had a possibility of more deeply understanding what Cuban (2013) calls the black box of teaching.

## **CHAPTER 6: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE TWO**

### **Introduction**

PAR Cycle Two explored more precisely how middle school teachers understood and utilized culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) in Sheltered EAL (SEAL) classrooms. As a CPR team of six persons (five teachers and myself), we co-constructed strategic ways that teachers addressed key principles relating to knowing and building relationships and considering student knowledge and skill when planning for and acting for learning in classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. PAR Cycle Two included Spring 2018 and early Fall 2018. The evidence from Spring 2018 supports findings about what is possible when teachers engage in co-planning and co-teaching. However, the institutional changes in Fall 2018 seriously challenged the teachers and myself in continuing the work we started and, indeed, interrupted the possibility of deepening the knowledge and skills of teachers as we moved forward. Thus, the PAR became a story of possibility mixed with how institutions can unintentionally interrupt forward progress and how elements of isomorphism make demands on administrative structures and impact the organizational structures of smaller groups (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Rowan, 2017; Weiss, 1995).

In this chapter, I delineate the PAR Cycle Two research actions, in particular the laser-like focus on the planning and learning actions of the participating co-teachers that occurred in Spring 2018, followed by a discussion of what occurred in early fall 2018 when that school year began. I explore how the CPR group and I collaborated to code and analyze the data and reflect on next steps, and how the findings of the PAR project from Spring 2018 provide evidence in light of the existing research literature, including organizational theory. Finally, I discuss how my leadership evolved during the course of the cycle that spanned Spring and Fall 2018. This is a story of hope followed by mixed results; we solidified how important planning for student learning based on knowledge of and relationships with

students is, but we were not able to fully hold onto the processes that we recognized as important and critical for student success and motivation in SEAL classrooms for Fall 2018. While we were able to cohere as a CPR group, much like a networked improvement community, and follow the “Plan Do Study” of the improvement sciences inquiry cycle with reflection and evidence to support each successive “do” step in spring 2018, we were then not able to fully transfer that into Fall 2018 actions that supported the five teachers in the CPR group as well as the new teachers who were hired as SEAL teachers (n=7) for our increasing numbers of English Language Learners (Bryk et al., 2015).

### **PAR Cycle Two: Actions and Evidence**

Initially, what I proposed at the conclusion of PAR Cycle One involved two connected threads of learning work with two different, but complementary CPR groups – the co-teacher group (n=5) would focus on instruction and an administrative group could focus on structures and school culture. However, that was more ambitious than the time commitment for administrators or myself would allow. Thus, we decided to focus on the CPR co-teachers and zero in on the overarching research question: To what extent can the middle school teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) in Sheltered EAL (SEAL) classes? The organization and culture of the school were grappling with how to embrace CLRP school-wide, but by focusing on the most valuable asset – the teachers themselves, I felt we could, as a small group, more thoughtfully and explicitly choose practices that reflected CLRP and impacted the student experience and learning in the classroom. We would then have sufficient evidence of how to move this forward in the micro context of individual classrooms and teachers that could inform the meso structure of the institution. In this section, I look at how we used the PAR inquiry process more effectively with teachers and describe the data analysis process in Spring 2018

and follow that with a look at the continued PAR Cycle Two sequence in fall 2018 (August-October, 2018).

As a result of our decisions, this PAR cycle initially included a systematic approach that supported teachers in two ways: focusing on the students through a “Mapping the Class” Activity and co-developing a more in-depth focus on the planning and learning actions of the teachers through observations in planning meetings and classrooms. Three rounds of data collection, coding, and reflections set the stage for a focused Community Learning Exchange (CLE) in March of 2018 and subsequent observations following the CLE. For a complete outline of the key leadership actions of our CPR team and the data collected from January to May 2018, see Appendix K, which demonstrates the ways we used iterative evidence from the inputs or activities to make decisions about successive actions.

During the course of this PAR Cycle, we used a more focused and purposeful approach to scheduling specific observations and focusing the CPR group on coding and reflecting on the evidence throughout the process as we iteratively made collaborative decisions about emerging themes and next steps. By systematically collecting evidence, sharing evidence, and coding and reflecting on the evidence, the approach clearly increased understanding on the part of teachers about what it means to plan and act for learning with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Further, the five teachers developed a process for becoming genuine research partners throughout the cycle and enacting PDSA cycles.

As we concluded the 2017-2018 school year, the CPR team had a general feeling of positivity and celebration as was indicated in the final semi-structured interviews. Not only had we come together as a true team of inquiring professionals, but we had co-created understandings and practices that felt far more student-centered and inclusive CLRP principles. Further, we used those understandings to create foundational documents that we

hoped would support the increasing numbers of SEAL teachers in planning and acting for effective learning as the new school year commenced in August of 2018.

As we began in August with an expanded SEAL teaching team (n=12), we were hopeful to welcome the new energy and ideas of the additional teachers to our successful team and began the year with a CLE that was co-planned by our original CPR team. However, while it became clear that the new members of the team were grateful for the experiences and support of the returning members, it became evident that the new structures, programs and demands that were placed on members of the CPR team (namely the Sheltered EAL teachers), were going to limit our ability to deepen and continually strengthen the practices and principles we had harvested from our work in the spring. The key leadership actions and evidence collected in Fall of 2018 was limited to reflections through such protocols as 4-square reflection, exit tickets and Google forms as well as ongoing memoing. In this section, I analyze the data from Spring 2018 and Fall 2018, including school context and its impact on moving forward.

### **Analysis of Data: Spring 2018**

First, I examine the analysis of data in Spring 2018 and Fall 2018. The participating CPR members and I documented and analyzed the evidence. In addition, through the use of Google Forms, I collected reflection memos that I then summarized and shared with the participants for the purposes of member checking as well as co-creating or selecting the next actions in the sequence – a clear ongoing cycle of Plan-Do-Study-Reflect (PDSR) before acting, which is an important distinction in the PDSA cycle (Bryk et al., 2015). We found this repetitive step of studying + reflecting to act a critical component of our work that comports with the understanding of praxis (reflection+ action) of Freire (2000).

I used deductive and inductive coding schemes. During the course of PAR Cycle One, I started a coding scheme using the principles of CLRP gleaned from research (see Appendix



L) that was developed from the extant literature. In addition to the focus of teacher talk, codes reflected the kinds of instructional strategies, literacy foci and co-teaching model that were in evidence in the classroom observations. Over the course of that cycle and continuing in this PAR Cycle Two, I expanded the coding scheme to reflect the patterns that were deduced in the evidence collected – primarily transcripts of observations and interviews as well as reflective memos.

Again, due to the structured coherence of the research design in this cycle, I was able to triangulate evidence through coding and the subsequent participants' coding of the transcripts as well as through reflections by the CPR team members and my own memos. Through the involvement of the CPR Team and the analysis and triangulation of evidence, I was able to identify three connected themes:

1. When planning for learning, it is essential to have a clear understanding of priorities and learning goals in order to plan effective learning progressions and support students in meeting these goals.
2. The quality of planning for learning impacts the quality of acting for learning in the classroom with students.
3. A focus on the analysis of objective evidence (e.g., transcripts) is a key lever in utilizing the PDSA cycles for strong evidence-based actions.

While these three themes resonated strongly with teachers in Spring 2018 and echoed at the start of the Fall 2018, the complexities of the institutional changes in the school context were a major factor in being able to support deepening the work in the new school year. I discuss these changes in Fall 2018 before discussing the supporting evidence for the three findings.

## **School Context and Analysis of Data: Fall 2018**

For Fall 2018 data, I detail the changes in the school context that both added energy and yet hindered the momentum as we began the new school year. Following that I review the actions that we were able to take, the evidence that was collected and the how the data was analyzed.

**School context changes.** In the spring of 2018, the middle school administration made the decision to organize the students into clusters for instruction and eliminate the extra Language B teacher. The decision had both positive and negative implications for the teachers and students involved in the Sheltered EAL program. The number of teachers involved in the SEAL program increased exponentially from  $n=7$  to  $n=12$ . While these increasing human resources focused on program development may have had positive implications, the momentum gained by working closely with the five CPR members focused on the Sheltered EAL students was not sustainable.

**Impacts.** As a result, the students in the SEAL program were grouped into one cluster in order to support the new structure with the same number of Sheltered EAL teachers. The inadvertent consequence of assigning all the students in one cluster was that they ended up in more classes that were exclusively populated by beginning language learners. While initially the Sheltered EAL classes were designated as English, Individuals & Societies, Science and Design, the students were now also primarily sequestered for Math and Physical Education as well. Further, with the advent of clusters for instruction, the mainstream discipline teachers had the advantage of teaching one grade level; for example, the Grade 8 English teacher now only taught Grade 8 where under the previous organizational structure, that teacher may have taught both Grades 7 and 8 or maybe Grades 6, 7, 8. While this had advantages for the disciplinary teachers, there were three different teachers teaching the Sheltered EAL English class. Although positive in terms of increased collaboration among disciplinary teams

focused on CLRP with the SEAL students, the Sheltered EAL teachers now had to form productive collaborative relationships with a larger number of teachers – not easy to do with the limited time available for collaborative planning.

Further change impacted the Sheltered EAL teachers when the Language B EAL teacher was released and not replaced. While, again, a potentially positive change for the students had one fewer teacher and the Sheltered EAL teachers who knew them well taught Language B, the SEAL teachers had another preparation, stretching them yet thinner. The Sheltered EAL teachers now had five different teaching preparations to fulfill, impacting their ability to effectively apply the lessons from the Spring PAR work, and participating in this PAR as active researchers. In communication with one of the participants in August of 2018, she replied,

I am sorry for the late reply, at this time I am drowning and need time to catchup with co-teaching-planning and Language B planning. I have greatly benefitted from this project, but at this time, I cannot work on this project and give a quality education to my students (NB, email communication, August 15, 2018).

Therefore, although we were able to continue to function as a PLC and impact the teachers new to the SEAL program with the lessons learned and the co-constructed foundational documents from the Spring of 2018, there was simply no time or space for us to continue to actively act as a research team.

Further, since I served as the Director of Curriculum and Assessment as well as the head of all accreditation and authorization studies, the responsibilities impacted my ability to focus intently on program development in this one area over a long period of time. The breadth of the projects within our organizational structure and capacity hindered deepening the work of the prior spring.

In this section, I presented an analysis of the promising evidence we had as a small CPR team in Spring 2018. Then I detailed the changes in the school context that hindered the deepening of the improvement work that came out of last spring and the impact on the SEAL

teachers. Initially the persistent use of the PDSA cycle and effective triangulation of evidence through member-checking was an important step forward in Spring 2018, but was limited in Fall 2018. However, we had learned how we could pursue quality learning at Hayward and what the research suggests about the necessary focus for planning quality learning through the lens of CLRP and we continued to look for opportunities to further that learning.

In the following section, I set the stage for how we talk about quality learning at Hayward and what the research suggests about the necessary focus for planning quality learning through the lens of CLRP. Following that, I share the analysis of the evidence collected through the initial PAR Cycle in Spring of 2018 through a “Mapping the Class” activity as well as observing initial planning meetings and classroom teaching. Using this evidence, as well as reflections by the participating CPR members and myself, I discuss the emergence of the three important themes. I then forward what happened as a result of the Community Learning Exchange process and how that changed effectively impacted the planning and acting for learning processes and results.

### **Quality of Planning and Initial Observations**

In the early part of PAR project – PAR Cycle One in Fall 2017 – much of the learning work focused on establishing a firm understanding of what is and is not happening in order to formulate an evidenced-based plan to move forward. Through allowing ourselves the time and space to focus on what “is”, we developed relational bonds as a CPR group; we had a deeper understanding and agreement on what we need to support our increasing efficacy to plan high quality learning experiences for diverse learners. I discuss how we talk about learning at Hayward and what the research says about the drivers in planning for learning with a CLRP lens. Then, I analyze the initial evidence about what was and was not driving the planning for learning as well as how that played out in the way teachers were acting for learning in the classroom itself. Next, I examine how the “Mapping the Class” contributed to

our ability to know the students and plan for learning and how teacher planning changed over time.

### **Drivers for Learning**

We rooted our discussions of learning at Hayward through three distinct phases that reflect the essence of Plan-Do-Study with sufficient reflection at each step. While important not to confuse PDSA planning with classroom planning, there are some similarities. We knew that practitioners use information and significant resources (e.g., knowledge of students, knowledge of learning goals, curriculum and pedagogy) to plan for learners and learning in the classroom (acting for learning). In assessing for learning, a practitioner uses intentional formative and summative assessment strategies to reflect on the learning and inform the next round of planning for learning.

**Planning for CLRP.** In planning for CLRP, the research suggests that the significant resources or culturally responsive drivers in planning for learning are the students themselves – including their backgrounds as well as, in this case, their linguistic and academic readiness based on assessment for learning (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Walqui & Heritage, 2012). In the case of a Sheltered EAL class serving beginning language learners, one would also expect to draw on the evidence base in language acquisition in order to best plan for learning. After all, one main purpose of any Sheltered program and of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction is to support high levels of language acquisition while ensuring the students’ mother tongues and cultures are affirmed and used to access and then stretch new learning (Carder, 2012). However, throughout Cycle One and at the start of Cycle Two, an abundance of evidence suggested a lack of clarity in the CPR groups about these drivers and how that lack of clarity impacted the quality of planning for learning as well as acting for learning in the classroom itself. As a result, I explored the evidence that pointed to a lack of clarity in how teachers use knowledge about students when they plan for learning.

**Planning for learning.** The lack of clarity among the co-teachers about what and who should be *driving* their planning was evident from observations beginning in PAR Cycle One. We started our deeper inquiry by a “Mapping the Class” activity that I discuss in more detail below. The activity included teacher responses to questions about each of the students, in other words, how much the teachers actually knew about the students personally and academically? The activity and subsequent reflective discussions and memos as well as planning meeting observations revealed that knowledge about the students was not a focus of planning or teaching. The teachers became aware that they were not completely knowledgeable about the literacy access levels of the students – in a class focused on language acquisition. Finally, the teachers realized from reflecting on the coding from their planning meetings that they were not focusing on students or student learning in their planning. As a result, in the sub-sections below, I discuss the evidence and insights that the “Mapping of the Class” activity and the coding of the planning meeting transcripts afforded the CPR group as well as how the initial classroom observations reflected the episodic and disconnected nature of the planning itself.

### **Mapping the Class: Evidence Informs Planning**

Perhaps the most insightful moments for the co-teachers in understanding how they do and do not plan for students came in the “Mapping of the Class” activity and the subsequent co-coding of both that artifact and the transcripts from the planning meetings. The intention of the mapping was to understand what co-teachers knew about students and about their learning with the intention of leveraging personal, cultural and linguistic knowledge to maximize the learning for each student. This advice directed me: “Start with the students; then move to the practices by focusing on student assets and needs” (L. Tredway, personal communication, January 17, 2018). After six months of working with the students, asking

teachers to map a classroom of learners in order to reflect produced powerful realizations about what the teachers have paid attention to in the learners and what they have not.

Within the mapping activity teachers created a visual representation of their chosen class reflecting on the assets and attributes (cultural, personal, learner) that could be used to leverage their learning as well as to make connections among various students as possible points for flexible groupings that would also support quality learning in the classroom (see Figure 11 for an example of a map).

In the analysis of the five maps, we had several key insights: the difference between perceived ability to do well on the language test used as the school benchmark assessment for language levels – the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) – and actual class performance; the absence of WIDA scores in the mapping exercise for students (only two out of five maps contained these); and the unbalanced personal knowledge of teachers about students beyond observable behaviors.

Students' WIDA scores provide information on students' level of English language in speaking, listening, reading and writing, but they did not necessarily correlate to students' class performance or engagement as measured by the teachers' descriptors. High WIDA scores did not seem to match perceptions of student engagement or motivation. For example, in the two Grade 8 maps, only one student out of the top five, as indicated by WIDA scores, was described as engaged and motivated, while a student designated as the major student of concern ranks highest in the class on his WIDA reading score. In the Grade 7 maps, one student who scored highest among all the strands of WIDA was designated as in the bottom third for class engagement and performance. Interestingly, in both cases, the students perceived as low-performing within the class despite a higher potential level of language acquisition are male. Whether gender had significance had impact would, of course, necessitate further inquiry; however, the concern regarding the lack of engagement of the

students scoring higher on the WIDA assessment had a potential correlation with the absence of high expectations that seems to permeate the planning and acting for learning as evidenced by the initial planning and learning observations.

Along this same vein, however, while WIDA was the main assessment tool used to ascertain students' level of readiness in terms of language acquisition to make evidence-based decisions about scaffolding for linguistic readiness, only two maps even contained reference to WIDA scores. I wondered whether the teachers were aware of the importance of the assessment or whether they understood how this assessment information could and/or should play an important role in planning for learning focused on linguistic responsiveness.

On average the teachers noted two personal characteristics describing observable behaviors. The observable and primarily positive classroom behaviors noted were: "motivated, respectful, talkative, kind, shy". The positive classroom and personal attributes are tied to the genuine caring and respect for the students on the part of the participating teachers as noted in classroom observations during PAR Cycle One. However, teachers knew much less about areas of outside interest; most teachers were able to list only one for each and, on one map, nearly 30% of the students had no interests listed. One of the participating disciplinary teachers admitted in his debrief that he was "sad" to realize he knew so little about the students, indicating that "when this became a co-teaching situation this year, I guess I kind of left that up to the EAL teachers, figuring that was their responsibility" (PB, personal communication, January 22, 2018). All participating teachers were well aware of the cultural affiliation of the students as well as personal affiliation and found it easy to create those connections, but all admitted in the debrief conversations that these affiliations were not frequently used to create groupings for interest-based learning. Rather, as MR pointed out, "Groupings are usually based on who works well together" (memo during personal



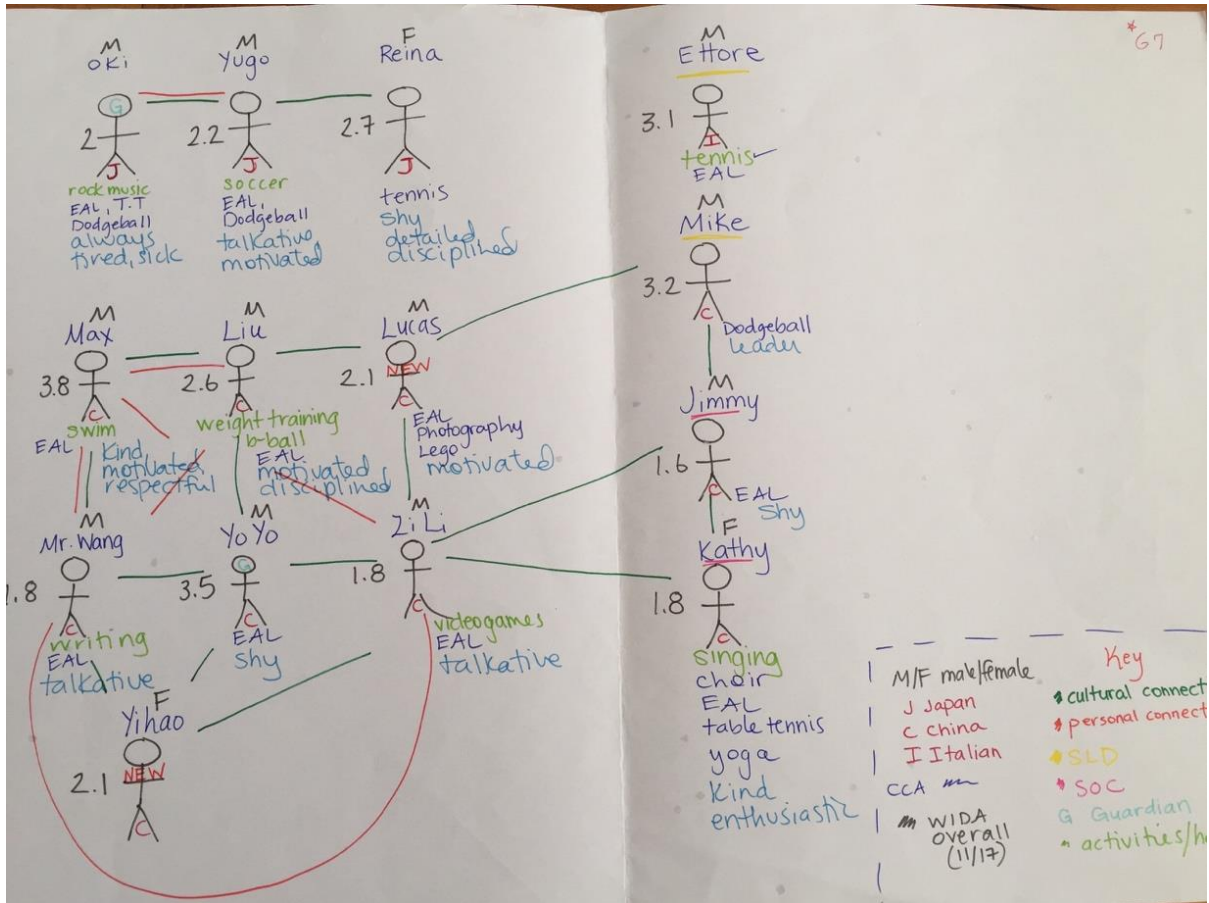


Figure 11. Mapping the class example.

communication, January 24, 2018). This observation was reinforced during the planning meeting observations where there was no planning discussion on grouping students according to interest groups not to mention how the content connected to student interests and backgrounds.

In follow-up reflections after the “Mapping the Class” activity, participating teachers had a series of “aha” moments captured that included an overall realization about the lack of shared understanding about learners. The learners’ profiles – their WIDA scores, cultural funds of knowledge, personal interests – do not seem to be driving planning for learning. The teachers realized that knowing the students is not something they deeply considered in planning for learning, as MR’s reflection indicates, “The activity today raised a lot of ‘wonderings’ in me. As I create a profile for each of my kids in the class, I wonder if I am really representing the ‘real’ them. . . I need to get to know them more. I want to represent them accurately and truthfully” (personal email communication, January 27, 2018). This was echoed in the reflections of the other participating teachers: NB: “Placing the students on the chart was an eye opener . . . I need to collect more data.” DC: “It was surprisingly challenging to plot out . . . I would love to learn more . . .” (personal email communication, January 27, 2018). Triangulating these observations was an entry in my memo following this activity that indicated,

The participating teachers were very engaged during the process of mapping – one of them even stating ‘this is going to be fun!’; however, upon exiting the activity, every one of them commented about an increased desire to know more about the students. Another observation was that only two out of the five used the whole forty-five minutes while the others seemed to ‘hit a wall’ with what they knew about 30 minutes in (memo, January 26, 2018).

The evidence from the class mapping activity and the teacher reflections indicate that collective attention paid to individual and group student assets, readiness and interest were playing a negligible role in the teachers’ thinking. They realized that they should, six months in, not only have a deeper understanding of various aspects of their students, but be using that

knowledge to plan for engaging, high quality learning. The finding about teacher knowledge of students comported with their realizations about how they go about planning. I discuss next how the evidence from the planning meetings reinforced the emerging finding.

### **Teacher Planning Meetings**

The finding that students and their cultural background and linguistic levels were not utilized to drive planning was reinforced by transcripts of the initial planning meetings across all three groups of co-teachers. I analyzed and shared the analysis of the transcripts of the three planning meetings between February 6 and February 8, 2018, with a focus on what the utterances referenced (see Table 8 for the coding categories and sample utterances from Planning Meeting 1. For the full coding table with additional examples, see Appendix M.)

I devised the codes both from the existing literature on what one might expect to see discussed in a focused CLRP planning for learning meeting (e.g., language scaffolds, high expectations, cultural responsiveness, translanguaging) as well as from codes that the transcripts revealed (e.g., organizational task talk, pedagogical strategies). I triangulated the data from the planning meetings with coding from participants, reflective discussions, and memos. Table 8 demonstrates the lack of focus on areas one would expect to see with diverse beginning language students – that of specific language scaffolds, assessment-focused instruction, cultural responsiveness, translanguaging and high expectations. Instead, there was a high level of focus on organizational task talk, literacy tasks (not necessarily instruction and practice), and disciplinary content coupled with the use of deficit language in describing students.

In a Sheltered EAL class in which a primary focus in teacher planning should be on the academic language acquisition of the students rooted in culturally relevant content, only fifteen percent of the utterances focused on specific language acquisition goals and tasks with the majority of those utterances simply stating the specific task the students would be

Table 8

*Planning Meeting #1 Coding – Significant CLRP Categories*

Codes for categories of talk	Number of utterances TN = 105	% of talk	Example of utterances
Scaffolding Language	SL – 6	5	“. . . some sentence starters and add some pictures – they could sort and then write the description”. “For the chalk talk, you’ll create visuals and key words”.
Translanguaging	TL – 0	0	
Flexible Groupings	FGL - 7 FLI – 0	7	“If we’re going to do it by skill, then this is the grouping we’ll follow.”
Culturally Responsive	CR – 2	2	“. . . and link them to their own lives.”
Deficit Language	DL - 10	10	“If you want to use a different organizer for your group, since you take care of the lower ones.”
Assessment focused	AF – 3	2	“We can write our observations on the strengths . . . and then we write down next steps . . . “(referring to reading conferences)
High Expectations:	HE – 0	0	
Use of planning resources	PR – 0	0	

working on – writing a news article, asking questions, playing a vocabulary game. In addition, only 6% focused on scaffolding that would reflect an understanding of using linguistic responsiveness to push learning. At no time during these planning meetings were the disaggregated WIDA attainment levels (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening) of the students referred to specifically to plan for purposeful grouping according to task. For example, one positive and helpful tool of the WIDA assessment is that of a series of “I can” statements that allows teachers to focus linguistically responsive choices on what the students *can* do and support them in stretching themselves to the next level of “I can”, thereby building their capacity in increments. The only primary attribute of the students’ as a focus for linguistic responsiveness was their ‘low’ language ability and or ‘low’ ability to focus and function as indicated by the following utterances utilizing deficit language: “I will be needing help with mentor texts with sci fi and fantasy with the lower kids” (MR, planning meeting transcript, February 6, 2018). “Strong kids and then a silly kid for pairing” (DC, planning meeting transcript, February 6, 2018).

Beyond that, only 3% of the utterances focused on assessment-related information with only one out of the three alluding to planning for instruction based on assessment observations: “We can write our observations on the strengths . . . and then we write down next steps . . .” (MR, planning observation, February 6, 2018). There was only one instance of student work being at the table during a planning meeting and that was simply a chart of the previous vocabulary quiz results at PB and CM’s meeting on February 8, 2018.

Furthermore, within the exchange of ideas captured in the transcripts of the planning meetings, only two utterances focused on the cultural background and interests of the students to connect new learning to background experiences or funds of knowledge. One such reference had a level of admittance that the topic at hand (religious rituals) was difficult to connect to the students. “I think Ettore is the only one who goes to church in the class – he

can share some rituals” (PB/CM planning meeting, February 8, 2018). The other mention of culture referenced the choice of a field trip being taken to Chinatown because all of the students were Chinese. Rather, the major focus of the planning time was taken up by organizational task talk (37%) and disciplinary content focus (13%), suggesting that what was driving the planning was concern for classroom organization and division of tasks in combination with disciplinary content (see Appendix M for a full chart of coding).

Beyond the lack of focus on the drivers one might expect in a CLRP planning discussion was the purely unfocused nature of the planning in general that impeded high quality planning. Conversations jumped from one topic to another with few connections. This is illustrated below in the sequence between PB and CM during their planning meeting of February 8, 2018:

Suffering is a key understanding . . .  
Should we change the world wall a little bit?  
We need a symbol of Buddhism for the See Think Wonder.  
Mandalas, we could draw and look at how they are made – a practice – don’t say bad things about people.

As is evident in this exchange, teachers put ideas on the table one after another, with little actual response or connection. I observed and coded this pattern across the other two pairs of co-teachers with PB and DC discussing everything from a See-Think-Wonder, to a matching exercise, to a gallery walk, to a foldables activity and finally small group work in a Google Doc within the span of a twenty-five minute planning time while MR and NB discussed prepping for a field trip, learning to ask questions, practicing a speech, writing a news article, mentor texts, reading conferences/comprehension and practicing interviews in their thirty-minute planning time. As was observed by Tredway in her review of the evidence as well as in my own reflective memos, the planning for learning was very ‘episodic’. “They do a little of this and that. They need to plan with learning intentions in mind - focused on language and language development” (Skype conversation, February 15, 2018).

Following teachers' coding of the transcripts, the participating teachers wrote a reflective memo in which they recognized the lack of sufficient attention to cognitive and language levels of students and cultural competence and background. DC indicated a need for "a greater focus on how students can be engaged with learning on a cognitive level that reflects their true abilities" (February 21, 2018). Often teachers confuse language acquisition with cognitive and thinking levels of the students and tend to think the students are not capable of higher-level cognitive push; thus, they construct tasks with language ability in mind, not cognitive levels, in this case, of middle school students. NB indicated in her reflection after coding the planning meeting transcript that: "I could not find any mentioned (references to CLRP) except that during the lesson the students are asked to relate some aspects to their home country or language" (February 21, 2018).

While the maps demonstrate that teachers knew something about the students' home language and culture, the knowledge did not appear to influence their planning. Instead, as CM suggests: "There was a lot of talk about strategies, language skills (mostly vocabulary) and content, but little focused on how content is culturally relevant to students", and MR said: "Most of the planning time was spent on organization . . . less focus on the lesson and learning outcomes of students" (February 21, 2018). This perception was echoed by CM following her coding of the planning meeting, "We only plan for one day at a time; we don't plan with the end in mind" (reflection discussion, February 21, 2018). And as MR, stated, "We're still on the crawling method; still figuring it out" (reflective discussion, February 21, 2018).

The planning meeting evidence supports these reflection statements as teachers tend to focus on activities, rather than think about the learning and how to intersect the need for language acquisition with the cognition and culture of the students. Next, I focus on the initial

classroom observations and how they reflected the lack of quality planning as observed above.

### **Initial Classroom Observations**

In early February, I conducted classroom observations of the three co-teaching partners. The lack of focused drivers for the planning, as well as the loose, disconnected conversation style with which the planning took place, played out as the co-teachers implemented their planning in an attempt to support student learning. The type of planning impacted their acting for learning in the classroom in two overarching ways: teachers were unable to fully utilize the human resource of two teachers in the classroom effectively; as a result, they jumped from one activity to another with little to no transition or connection; and the teachers paid almost no attention to the linguistic or cultural diversity as seen through a lack of intentional flexible grouping.

Numerous co-teaching models can be utilized in order to capitalize on human resources to support student learning. Dove and Honigfeld (2010), indicate, however, that if there is only one student group and one teacher leading the teaching that the other teacher needs to take on the role of doing purposeful scaffolding (mini-lessons for individuals or small groups); purposeful, targeted assessment; or working as a team to deliver instruction. With smaller groups, two teachers may be teaching the same content but using different strategies to compliment students' learning preferences, may be teaching different content to support levels of readiness, or may be facilitating station teaching to target specific skills or interest areas. With any of these types of co-teaching; however, each teacher has a specific, focused 'job' that calls on them to equitably, if differently, be responsible for supporting student learning. Unfortunately, during the first classroom observations, all of the teaching, with the exception of one fifteen-minute writing task, was whole-class and only one of the co-teaching teams was actually exhibiting signs of actual co-teaching. For example, they used



tag-team modeling and facilitating instruction or instructions or coaching individual students during independent work time. The other two classrooms were classic examples of one teaching, one drifting with the drifting co-teacher typically being the Sheltered EAL specialist. When drifting, it seemed the chief role was to manage individual student behavior coupled with some individual or group interaction to coach learning. The outcome was lessons with limited instruction – or the use of specific pedagogical strategies – to push learning; only one example of modeling and one of role-playing was observed in these three 80-minute lessons. Rather, the classes were filled with instructions – or the presenting of steps to follow in completing an independent or group task. The episodic nature of the planning played out in the episodic, activity-based classroom instruction with whole-class sharing limiting the number of language learners who spoke. In each of the co-teaching classes, there was a minimum of four complex sets of instructions detailing entirely different learning engagements or activities – often distinctly unconnected to one another.

The style of whole class, episodic, and activity-based teaching impacted the co-teachers' ability to act with responsiveness for cultural and linguistic diversity. They did not use flexible student groupings that are important to support extended structured interaction and purposeful scaffolding for linguistic responsiveness as well as purposeful grouping for interest or cultural responsiveness. In fact, in only one class were students split into two groups at one point to support readiness in writing with the use of a mentor text. While some use of language scaffolds was evident in the form of sentence stems, paragraph frames and visuals, they were used with the whole class rather than based on need to stretch learning. And in all three classes, no explicit personal or cultural connections were made or utterances or activities that were geared toward high expectations by stretching all learners.

In my reflective memo (February 21, 2018), following both the initial planning meeting and classroom observations of the three teaching teams, I noted:

There is significant evidence that points to a lack of clarity in supporting any kind of coherent planning and acting for learning – lack of clarity regarding the curriculum, lack of clarity regarding the ‘power standards’ or learning goals, lack of clarity regarding decision making around the evolution of culturally relevant curriculum for these particular classes – what IS the most important take-away learning for these students and what exactly is driving our decisions about how to use our/their assets to support high quality learning? Further, are we being thoughtful and explicit in our planning and acting, or are we just making it up as we go along? At this point, all the evidence points to the fact that we are clearly just making it up!

At this point in the research, it became clear that, six months into the school year, a significant intervention was necessary in order to build teacher capacity to actually act on their increasing awareness of how to plan for effective instruction. While their intentions were certainly honorable and their awareness of the elements of CLRP was deepening, the ability to actually capitalize on those intentions to drive quality CLR planning and acting for learning needed attention.

In this section, I detailed the evidence that illustrated a lack of clarity about the goals of the program and clarity and structures that would underpin both effective planning and acting for learning. In following section, I discuss how the evidence from these data and full-day Community Learning Exchange impacted the quality of planning. The planning changed the acting for learning in the classroom.

### **Building Teacher Capacity: Changes in Planning and Acting for Learning**

Following the observations, I shared transcripts with the co-teachers and we worked together to co-construct a plan for a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) during which we gave ourselves the time and space to address our lack of planning and acting for learning with the students and tenets of CLRP in mind. We combed through the evidence for patterns that pointed to the most value-added areas of focus (see Appendix M for aggregation of these patterns and coding). I shared the document with the participating teachers to conduct a member-check on the analysis as a prelude to developing the plan for the CLE. These inquiry questions drove our reflection and planning in order to develop strong acting in CLRP:

- How might we develop a clear structure or protocol to guide culturally and linguistically responsive planning for learning?
- How might we make the best of our human resources through increasing understanding of roles and responsibilities in both planning for learning and acting for learning in the classroom?
- How might we increasingly utilize effective principles of learning (including language objectives) and evidence-based instructional strategies and routines (such as extended, structured interaction) to boost the cognitive engagement and language learning of all students?
- How might the teaching and learning focus more on the background and interests of the students?

I discuss how a Community Learning Exchange fueled by these questions significantly impacted quality planning for learning as measured by a focus on CLRP principles which in turn played itself out in high quality acting for learning in the classroom, which resulted in necessary praxis, or deeply looking at evidence and reflecting in order to decide on commitments and actions (Freire, 1970). Then I discuss the evidence from a second planning meeting and the subsequent and final classroom observations.

### **Community Learning Exchange**

With this evidence and query in mind, we co-planned a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) for March 2, 2018. The findings from these initial observations played a significant role in focusing the efforts of the six-hour CLE (see Appendix N for an outline of the CLE). The full day not only allowed us to come together as a focused professional learning community to learn and work together for the benefit of our diverse learners, but as a day to celebrate the strengths in the team. We collectively created learning plans that could be enacted over the course of the following weeks to explore the effects of increasingly

explicit and focused planning on the assets of the teachers and students as well as the engagement and learning of the students themselves. Working as both a whole group and in co-teaching partnerships, we explored possible answers and next steps related to the inquiry questions. They brought the students to the table through their class maps and were more focused on the specific learning goals at hand and instructional strategies to support those specific goals, and on the roles and responsibilities each would assume. The team reflections and commitments to action are part of an active study session of the PDSA cycle so necessary for actually constructing substantive action plans (Bryk et al., 2015).

**Reflections and commitments.** Final reflections on the accomplishments of the day celebrated increasing clarity in understanding how to effectively plan for learning as well as commitments to action in the coming weeks that would focus planning on increasing elements of CLRP. The teachers realized how students could and should drive the planning for culturally and linguistically responsive learning. In an individual reflective memo about the CLE, all commitments to action focused on planning for learning with the word “students” as a dominant refrain (see Table 9). Seemingly, if we can get teachers out of the ‘last minute’ mode and into a space of thoughtfully considering the connection between the most important learning outcomes and the students themselves, the focus on CLRP becomes a driving force.

My memo reflections following the CLE on March 2 spoke to the efficacy that was achieved by coming together with the time and space to fully consider how to use our increasing understanding of CLRP to effectively plan and act for learning while still giving voice to the work ahead:

Whew . . . 6 hours of a learning exchange -- it was a great exchange of ideas and amazing to me that it has taken us so long to get this on a schedule and do it - two years into this program (or at least 18 months) and it really wasn't being developed on good principles of learning, language acquisition or any other principles -- perhaps survival. But it's hugely complex and next year we will have even more teachers teaching this course -- and the courses aren't even set up in terms of why, what or

Table 9

*Learning Exchange Commitments*


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CPR Members	Commitments to Action
DC	“The focus will be on consistently meeting the needs of our <i>students</i> as our top priority.”
CM	“To come prepared with <i>student</i> scores, <i>student</i> work, WIDA data, can-do descriptors, AERO standards and my ‘teacher toolkit’ of strategies.”
NB	“Choosing purposeful strands and standards to teach the <i>students</i> and to focus on the <i>human aspect</i> versus the curriculum aspect of teaching.”
MR	“Developing learning plans that are more choice-based and <i>culturally accommodating and responsive</i> for the 8 <sup>th</sup> grade <i>students</i> while keeping in mind the focused goals for our <i>students</i> .”
PB	“We chose WIDA standards as a basis for clear, <i>student friendly goals for students</i> to develop language . . . (We commit to) a <i>lesson structure that focuses on targeted language development</i> through content, not content through language development.”

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how. Despite the increased human resources there is lots and lots to be done . . . but what a success to see the commitments to action focused on critical principles of CLRP!

**Praxis: Reflection to action.** Following the CLE, the co-teachers set to work in applying and transferring their commitments to both their planning and acting for learning. As Freire (2000) reminds us the starting point for any action is the present and concrete situation of the persons engaged in the work. Through his guiding principle of reflecting before one acts (praxis), the teachers developed a new consciousness about what was missing from their well-meaning, but often misguided attempts, to plan and teach. In this case, reflecting on their work as teachers engaged in planning by using the maps they had completed about students, they used evidence to make changes. This activity is the heart of the improvement sciences and the 90-day cycle of Plan Do Study Act (Bryk et al., 2015), with the caveat that we added a stronger reflection piece between studying and acting. They had “planned” and “done”, and when they studied it, they reflected and were ready to act more meaningfully. As I discuss the final round of observations in planning meetings and classes that took place in late March, the finding of how quality planning for learning impacts the quality of acting for learning in the classroom emerged strongly.

### **Changes in Planning and Teaching**

In the final rounds of observations, I found significant differences in planning and teaching. I discuss the shifts in planning by comparing the data from the first planning meeting to the second and the shift in teaching and how the planning impacted the teaching.

**Planning shifts.** Within the planning, the time spent on organizational task talk decreased significantly while the time spent on discussing particular scaffolds for language learning or linguistic responsiveness increased substantially (see Table 10 or Appendix O for the full coding scheme with examples). By this point in the planning (March 27), many of the utterances could be coded for more than one area of focus as they were more focused and

Table 10

*Comparison of Planning Meeting Transcripts*

Codes for categories of talk	PM #1 Total Utterances: 118	% of Talk	PM #2 Total Utterances: 94	% of Talk
Literacy	LS - 4 LR - 0 LW - 4 LV - 6	12	LS - 1 LR - 3 LW - 6 LV - 2	13
Scaffolding Language/ Learning	SL - 5	4	SL - 29	31
Translanguaging	TL - 3	3	TL - 1	1
Flexible Groupings	FGL - 7 FLI - 0	6	FGL - 8 FLI - 0	9
Disciplinary Content	DC - 13	11	DC - 12	13
Culturally Responsive	CR - 2	2	CR - 5	5
Deficit Language	DL - 7	6	DL - 7 (6/7 in one co-teaching pair)	7
Organizational task talk	OTT - 23	20	OTT - 9	10

detailed in their interactions. For example, in DC and PB's meeting on March 27, there was a discussion on the importance of moving from more concrete concepts to abstract at the same time discussing how they would have the students connect each of the elements of the particular case study culture to students' own home country and culture. This exchange could be coded both with reference to discussing learning progressions as well as cultural responsiveness. Perhaps most importantly, there was an increasing focus on extending the learning of the students rather than using deficit language or communicating low expectations. Utterances such as, "I'm just trying to think of how to extend them" and "What I need is the target – what do they need to achieve, and then I can figure out how to get them there" (PB & DC, planning meeting transcript, March 27, 2018).

While generally, the language about students shifted to more positive presupposition about ability and interest, one co-teaching partnership, in particular, was responsible for six of seven utterances coded as deficit language during the second observation. Phrases such as "I don't feel they can man the stations themselves", "it won't be successful", and "We would have never asked for an assignment like that" as well as, for example, a guided reading tracker document for Grade 8 that forward the expectations of "Holds book correctly" and "Tracks print with eyes" (MR/NB, planning meeting transcript, March 27, 2018). These responses communicated expectations far below what should be held for end-of-year Grade 8 students and suggest an area for further growth within the SEAL program in order to support high quality learning for all students with all teaching partners.

In reflecting on the differences, they noticed in their planning and acting for learning through a reflective memo the week of March 12 following the CLE, the co-teachers used multiple descriptors that identified their growth including an increasing consciousness of giving students opportunities to speak, relying on more structure, more focused planning and teaching, and more clarity in their joint planning sessions. One teacher said: "I can now



properly look at tasks and lesson structures more critically and really think about what they are designed to achieve”. Another realized he has to “focus on language objectives first”. And finally, “We are more focused on what is immediate and on small goals that lead to bigger objectives”. Indeed, I observed that the clarity of how to plan with the right drivers at the table that came out of the CLE was actively being used in their planning meetings. This transferred into what I observed in the classroom which I discuss in the next subsection.

**Transfer to classroom teaching.** The classroom observations following these planning meetings and reflections reinforced an increasing focus on specific elements for planning to which the teachers had committed during the learning exchange. While the organizational task talk decreased significantly in the planning meetings, the structured organization of the classes was improved. Students were learning in stations, with shoulder partners, engaging in increasingly interwoven areas of language focus (reading, writing, speaking, listening), motivated by timers to stay focused on the tasks at hand. Further, station teaching, parallel teaching and team teaching dominated the choice of co-teaching models rather than the previous model of one teaching, one drifting and this made a significant difference in the coherence of the lesson (a decrease in the number of instructions for disjointed activities). As increased use of flexible groupings supported increasing extended, structured interaction, the teachers introduced Kagan’s cooperative structures and specific protocols for reading/retelling which supported more language use by the students. In addition, the use of targeted language scaffolds increased in number and complexity to include tiered station activities, leveled books and differentiated writing groups, which, in turn, supported the increased use of purposeful instructional strategies such as modeling and guided practice. With further attention to language acquisition rather than content, it appeared easier for the co-teachers to infuse increasing routines and structures as well as communicate demands for high expectations by stretching the students’ writing time and using timers to

stretch their talking time. All of these structures increased equitable access for student learning (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

The examples above point to a much greater level of responsiveness on the part of teachers when acting for learning in the classroom – primarily with regard to linguistic responsiveness (see Table 11 for an overview of classroom observation coding or Appendix P). There is still room to consider how we might increase the level of cultural responsiveness and connection. While the students were reading leveled books of choice in one class and in another were encouraged to make connections between the case study city and cities they knew, there is still a wondering about how we think about curriculum through a conceptual lens rather than content in order to ensure increasing opportunities for personal, cultural connection and student agency.

### **Summary**

The PAR Cycle Two in Spring 2018 provided a powerful example of how structured teacher planning time results in stronger co-teaching. Through steps that seem quite simple on the surface but are complex in other ways and through detailed observation and coding so that teachers can look at evidence to make decisions, we were able to see deep changes in a short time period. In “Mapping the Class” and sharing and discussing the data of planning meetings and class observations with the participating teachers, they had insightful “aha” moments, and those “aha” moments did, indeed, bring about significant change in how the teachers planned and acted for learning with their students. In final semi-structured interviews with each of the participating teachers in April 2018, a dominant theme re-surfaced: the most powerful driver for change in this cycle was seeing and reflecting on the evidence – “Mapping the Class” and transcripts coded for elements of culturally and linguistically responsive practice. These examples from the interview solidify the importance of this finding:

Table 11

*Classroom Observation Coding*

Category	Observation 1	Observation 2
Extended, structured interaction	0 0 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word list activity 1-2-4</li> <li>• Shoulder partners</li> <li>• Kagan group structure</li> <li>• Reading/retelling protocols for quick writes</li> <li>• Talking Chips</li> </ul>
Flexible student groupings	Same table groups for 80 mins. Partners, writing groups (both leveled)  Quizlet groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kagan table groups (mixed)</li> <li>• Ocean groups – homogenous for writing with differentiated tasks</li> <li>• Station groups</li> <li>• Interest-based text selection groupings</li> <li>• Same table groups for whole lesson</li> </ul>
Explicit Instruction	Modeling Roleplaying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson of guided practice – already knew routines –</li> <li>• Modeling/guided practice x2</li> <li>• Modeling digital learning skill</li> <li>• Modeling – writing</li> </ul>
Use of language scaffolds	Sentence stems, Paragraph frame, Visuals Model text Sentence stems, Visuals, Repeated listening w/video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated writing groups</li> <li>• Modeling w/examples</li> <li>• Leveled books</li> <li>• Tiered station activities</li> <li>• Sentence Starters</li> <li>• Paragraph frames</li> </ul>
Personal/cultural connections	0 0 0	<p>Student Choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cities they know/like</li> <li>• books of own choosing</li> </ul>
High Expectations	0 0 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing time – last time we wrote for 8 minutes, today we're stretching it to 9</li> <li>• Talking time with English</li> <li>• Writing - with every word you should be writing 3 sentences</li> </ul>

I didn't realize how important it was to get that interest inventory from the students and how useful it is in grouping them (NB, interview, April 18, 2018).

Making actual profiles of the students . . . without putting it down on paper it can get lost in the background of lesson planning . . . bring them into the planning sessions helps (DC, interview, April 15, 2018).

Learning more about students' backgrounds and education so that can be honored (CM, interview, April 18, 2018).

Drivers that influence how they behave in the classroom or how they engage in the work (PB, interview, April 12, 2018).

MR takes this a step further when she discussed, with tears in her eyes, her realization that . . . when you tap into students' interests, they go with it even after class hours and are more invested in it. I think that's a really magical experience (interview, April 13, 2018).

Along with the "Mapping the Class" turning point, seeing and coding the transcript evidence was a key driver for change. Not only because it was objective evidence that allowed them to conclude that there was little evidence of attention to culturally and linguistically responsive practice, but also because by doing so, it brought about deeper understanding of what specific elements made up CLRP. As DC relayed, "I began to understand that there is a structure to it – specific components that you can concretely plan for rather than just an overarching soft concept. It's helped me think in more specific terms" (interview, April 15, 2018). And, as MR indicated, "The evidence helped us see that by not responding to students, it is we who are putting more barriers in front of them that hinder their learning" (interview, April 13, 2018). My memo following the second class observations and the interviews reflected the power of evidence-based reflection and action. "Never before have I been so systematic with the recording and sharing of evidence to reflect on what IS and make that a driver for understanding and action. It's been powerful . . . it's also been exhausting (memo, April 20, 2018).

In this section, I narrated the story of growth and change in first part of PAR Cycle Two with strong evidence collected through a systematic cycle of Plan-Do-Study-Reflect

with the intention that this would carry over to Fall 2018. The spring experience illustrated the power of using iterative data in supporting that cycle and, in particular, the importance of the CPR team's involvement in the coding of data and reflection as a driver for positive change. In the next section, I use the evidence from the second part of this cycle in late Spring 2018 and continuing into the Fall to discuss that while the lessons learned from the systematic work of PAR Cycle Two in the Spring were able to have some positive impact going forward, new organizational structures and changes interrupted full leadership transfer as well as the continued systemic work of the CPR team members to triangulate evidence.

### **PAR Cycle Two: Late Spring - Fall 2018**

In this section, I discuss how we used the forward momentum and energy that came out of the final planning, observations and structured interviews to begin an iterative process to co-construct foundational documents that would guide further development of the program. I then move forward to detail how the changes in the structures as well as just the structures of the school itself interrupted our ability to continue this work as significant action research. Finally, despite these interruptions, I discuss the evidence that does point to positive impact on the widening team of Sheltered EAL teachers at Hayward.

#### **Creating Foundational Documents**

At the conclusion of PAR Cycle Two in April 2018, increasing energy and feelings of success fueled additional plans to create increasing clarity and use the lessons learned thus far to create foundational documents that would guide the program going forward. Utilizing a decision-making protocol, the CPR team decided that the most value-added foci for the co-creation of these documents included guiding statements, an outline of co-teaching roles and responsibilities and routines and expectations for the SEAL classrooms. In addition, the adoption of literacy progress monitoring tools as well as modified unit planning guidelines for semester one were highlighted. Over the course of the last six weeks of the school year,

teams comprised of the CPR team members worked to co-create these documents (see Appendix Q). Formalizing our learning in guidelines and policy documents often supports institutionalizing what has been done and learned. The Guiding Statements clarified that the primary goal of the program was significant language acquisition based on important principles of CLRP as well as the new approach to planning units. The document gave the teams permission to plan shorter, significant units that focused on all the strands of language through disciplinary concepts. The factors of student choice and connection to cultural background supported our new understandings of how culturally and linguistically responsive learning could occur at the classroom level.

Prior to breaking for the summer, we completed document drafts to support a planned-for CLE at the start of the school year 2018-19. We set our goals for the start of the school year, anticipating PAR Cycle Three, to be kicked off by a 90-minute Community Learning Exchange (CLE) that would be led by the current CPR members in order to use our learning and leadership to create a broader Learning Community that would encompass all of the Sheltered EAL disciplinary and EAL teachers and continue to flex our action research muscles while transferring the leadership of the action research to the existing, participating CPR teachers. However, at this time in the spring, neither I nor the CPR team members truly understood the impact that the structural changes and other ensuing administrative decisions and responsibilities would have on their efficacy or ability to lead their colleagues and continue an action research stance supported by CLE pedagogies as the program grew and evolved. As a result, and is often the case in PAR projects, institutional interruptions may temporarily delay progress and require rethinking of how to move forward (Grubb & Tredway, 2010). The structural changes that occurred as well as the additional administrative decisions and responsibilities impacted our plans.

## **Structural Changes and Administrative Decisions/Responsibilities**

Responding to demographic shifts as well as the need for more focused planning for learning at grade levels, the middle school administrators decided to change the structure of the middle school program to accommodate clusters of students, resulting in fewer teachers at each grade level. As a result, the SEAL program expanded to include 12 teachers during the 2018-2019 school year, doubling the number of teachers involved in teaching the Sheltered classes and including five teachers who were new to the school. Further, under the new structure, the Sheltered EAL teachers would take on the teaching of the Language B class for the SEAL students, adding significantly to the work-load of the SEAL teachers as no coherent curriculum for the Language B program had yet been developed. Further, with the structural changes, the pressing problem of planning time between co-teachers that had surfaced in both PAR Cycle One and Two was not fully addressed.

Additionally, I had responsibility for eight new projects, and those responsibilities directly impacted our ability to work cohesively as a CPR team to support the transference of leadership and systematic continuation of action research/CLE pedagogies. In light of these interruptions, while we were able to support the initial onboarding of the new teachers to the SEAL program with some success, we were unable to support the systematic continuation of the process as a participatory action research project. In discussing the actions that did take place in the Fall 2018 as well as evidence of impact for the work, I am hopeful that we can use evidence from the Spring cycle to persuade teachers and administrators of the importance of knowing students and engaging in planning to support authentic and more effective co-teaching for our culturally and linguistically diverse students.

### **Actions and Evidence: Fall 2018**

In the Fall of 2018, we were able to support a number of structured interactions among the much larger group of Sheltered EAL teachers in order to share our collective

understanding of what and how to plan with CLRP in mind. We began the transfer of our co-created understanding with a jointly planned Community Learning Exchange (CLE) as well as four weekly after-school meetings of the Sheltered EAL team, which were documented through exit tickets and Google Form reflections. Finally, we wrapped up the PAR project with the CPR team through a final semi-structured interaction.

### **Community Learning Exchange**

In the CLE, the existing five CPR team members were in teacher leadership roles for the incoming teachers (n=7) (see Appendix R for the CLE agenda). We facilitated several CLE pedagogies during the course of the exchange including that of diversity Journey Lines and Inner/Outer Circle as well as a four-corner reflection in order to plan for our next structured interaction. During the course of the reflections, several themes emerged. Seven participants explicitly expressed appreciation for the foundational documents because they clarified their understanding of the program; specifically, they thought the guiding statements clarified the goals of the program and the unit development guidelines were deemed useful. Released from a myriad of other program expectations, they confirmed that the students and language acquisition mattered most. The CLE reflections gave voice to the CLE pedagogies – in particular that of the diversity Journey Line and the Inner/Outer circle – as valuable learning processes rooted in the wisdom of the people in the room. With respect to the diversity Journey line, participants commented on the value in reflecting on our own views and biases and how they might impact our teaching stance with this group of learners. My memos also elaborated on this,

I was glad I put the five teachers from last year in the leadership position of being in the inner circle and talking to individuals in the outer circle; it was one of the processes that was mentioned that really helped them learn and modeled the importance of structured talking and interaction to learn (CP, memo, August 6, 2018).

The value in collaborating with colleagues, in particular in this instance, using the wisdom of the CPR Team in the Inner/Outer circle allowed all members, led by the CPR



Team, to collaborate on a list of culturally and linguistically responsive moves which sprouted a respectful appreciation for each other's wisdom. Eight out of the twelve participants at the conclusion of the CLE endorsed collaboration with the colleagues in the room as the most exciting development for them professionally. The reflections indicated that we had, as a CPR team, been able to use our hard-earned collective wisdom to support our incoming colleagues and begin the year with a feeling of hopeful anticipation that participation in this team was going to be a rewarding professional experience. As a result, the weekly meetings of the team served to re-emphasize these feelings and also supported the emerging findings of the overall PAR Cycle Two.

### **Weekly Meetings**

Following the initial CLE, the team of twelve co-teachers was able to meet together in a series of four after-school meetings on Fridays. Unfortunately, due to scheduling, these four subsequent meetings were only approximately 30 minutes in duration leaving little time for both team-building and exchange. Further, as was discussed in the changing context earlier in the chapter, the CPR team was simply overwhelmed with the new structures and, therefore I assumed planning responsibility for these meetings.

Nevertheless, in reflections on these times together, the participants reiterated the importance of student-centered planning. Eight teachers who indicated the freedom they felt in using time at the start of the year to plan for interactive activities to get to know the students and build their classroom learning community (two important aspects of CLRP) had increased their focus on planning with the students in mind. They further elaborated that it enabled them to be increasingly mindful of the social-emotional needs of these new students. The teachers indicated they felt their students were engaged and excited about learning.

In turn, reflections gave voice to the value in collaborating with one another (as a disciplinary team) and with co-teachers. One CPR team member indicated that "Seeing the

returning SEAL teachers take the lead” was the most exciting development yet (RB, reflective memo, October 2, 2018). Further reflections continued to comment on the importance of clarity in focus and freeing teachers up from the pressure of the Middle Years Programme criterion was enabling them to find greater success with the students and their language acquisition. Finally, consistent comments on the increasing literacy focus across the disciplines was promising. As one CPR team member emphasized, “This is a great team. People have higher expectations and are focusing on what students actually need” (CM, reflective memo, October 2, 2018). Next, I discuss the barriers that continued to interrupt full-scale transfer and impact.

### **Organizational Barriers**

Although the meeting reflections indicated that the quality of planning for learning impacted the quality of acting for learning in the classroom, the organizational structures decreased planning time. In this section, I discuss the impact on planning time and the mounting frustrations that teachers experienced.

With the Sheltered EAL teachers now expected to co-plan with four other teachers as well as plan for their own Language B class, the amount of time available for co-planning decreased. At the conclusion of the Spring PAR Cycle, we had not solved the recurring issue of the availability of quality planning time. While the participating teachers were finding time for planning with their other participating CPR team members, they were still not consistently planning with all of the disciplinary teachers with whom they co-taught. With the new organizational structures and pressures, this was exacerbated and beyond the late Friday afternoon time(s), the school schedule did not provide any sustainable, supported solutions – despite the overwhelming evidence in the Spring that attention to planning is key to the quality of acting for learning in the classroom. A full 80% of the SEAL disciplinary

and EAL teachers commented each time in their on-going reflections that planning time was their greatest need in continuing to plan and act for quality learning.

The frustration of the individual organizational actors with the system factors that impeded our ability to make the best use of our resources is echoed in my memos during the course of the Fall of 2018. In particular, as I wrote in September,

Progress that is made can be lost quite quickly when the actors change, the rules change and numbers grow . . . this is further derailed when leadership is not brought along in the process. Because SK was not involved in the Spring 2018 PAR Cycle, she did not see the amazing evidence and significant change that this evidence brought about . . . and thus, she had no way of deeply understanding the potential disruption that may be caused to the progress as a result of the organizational and structural decisions that were made. (CP, memo, September 4, 2018).

However, as we wrapped up the focused activities in Fall 2018, participating CPR team members completed a final semi-structured reflection. This reflection included open-ended sentence stems such as “I learned . . .”, “I feel . . .”, “I led or am leading . . .”, “I changed . . .”, “I will continue . . .”. There was strong repetition of the heightened awareness of what student-centered learning meant – including being culturally responsive and using data to guide instruction. As RB indicated, “I was reminded that the first question should always take one to students’ learning and well-being” (reflective memo, October 20, 2018). The participants indicated that being in the PAR was a powerful experience. Words such as “honored,” “fortunate,” “inspired” speak to the power of this process to forge not only collective but individual growth and change. They said they now see planning through the eyes of students and have more tools to use in increasing student voice and dialogue. They more fully understood how peer collaboration supports teachers and students. The sense of solidarity of colleagues participating in authentic and meaningful change was critical. Heartened by the sense of teacher voice and efficacy, the PAR Cycles are officially concluded, but the work of fostering these kinds of teacher interactions for the benefit of student learning is not.

In the next section, I connect the findings of this research to the existing literature including literature on Participatory Action Research, and the planning, acting and leadership for CLRP.

### **Sense-Making: The Findings in the Literature**

In this section, I connect the emerging themes of the study with literature. First, I discuss the power of participatory action research for moving the needle on teacher self-examination and change. Then I concentrate on how the literature comports with the processes we undertook to examine the evidence as a part of PAR cycles that in turn influenced the intentional planning of the teachers using CLRP principles. I discuss the extant literature on how the quality of planning impacted the quality for acting for learning in the co-teaching classroom. Finally, I enunciate the organizational and institutional theory literature to understand how we were not fully able to capitalize on our learnings from Spring 2018 to transfer that to the new school year, including Weick's loose vs tight coupling, Bowman and Deal's human resource and structural frames, and Weiss's theory on how institutions can often undermine reform efforts. Despite the complexities of Fall 2018, we were able to develop a policy that we can draw on to further the work of supporting SEAL students and teachers.

### **The Power of PAR**

The evidence from PAR Cycle Two in Spring of 2018 provides substantial data on the power of participatory action research. As hunter et al. (2013) indicate:

With its open, dialogic and interactive approach that emphasizes reciprocity, trust and collective action, PA<sup>1</sup>R breaks down the traditional barrier between the researcher and the researched. Through its direct contact and engagement with all participants in knowledge production, PAR seeks to build collaboration and enduring relationships with potential participants. These relationships respond to place-based problems through process of collective learning and community capacity building (p. 17).

During the course of this cycle, the close participation of the co-teachers in the collection and analysis of data was a significant catalyst for change. When the teachers

analyzed the data on student mapping and planning, they were quick to observe that they did not take the students into account in their planning nor did they plan systematically. The shift in the data from planning meetings in the previous section attests to the role of their collaborative participation and the need to collect iterative data in a PDSA cycle that includes deep reflection after the study of the practice-based evidence. As Stringer (2014) contends, the key to success is to start with where people are and enable them to develop their own analyses of the issues in order to consider findings and co-create next steps in the change process. Absent the level of qualitative evidence for teachers' work, that possibly could not have happened, and, thus, the PAR process with its emphasis on iterative evidence is critical (Bryk et al., 2015).

The PAR elements correlate significantly with the literature on teacher professional learning that suggests active collective learning with an element of peer coaching are hallmarks of effective programs, and teachers can co-create more equitable high-quality learning environments if they are afforded time and resources to do so (Grubb & Tredway, 2010; Savage et al., 2011; Timperly & Alton-Lee, 2008). Through the PAR process, significant evidence suggested that the CPR team evolved into a healthy professional learning community and that the professional learning community was a catalyst for increased effectiveness and efficacy in the teachers planning and acting for learning. I discuss how the increased effectiveness in planning and acting for CLRP intersects with the literature and how leadership for CLRP can become an intrinsic part of teacher practice.

### **Planning and Acting for CLRP**

Several studies support the importance of focusing on what we do know about language acquisition and maintaining cultural responsiveness. Evidence from teachers as well as the literature tell us that planning to act is a critical feature of teacher work, often overlooked in teacher observation.

**Language acquisition.** Scanlan and Lopez (2012) provide a tripartite model for the support of high-quality learning in diverse classrooms following a review of 79 empirical studies. Two elements of the model – high quality curriculum and linguistically responsive teaching – should drive planning for learning. As the PAR Cycle Two evolved, the increasing clarity on the learning outcomes of the curriculum for the students and increased focus on language acquisition and use of linguistic responsiveness both in planning and in the classroom impacted the quality of the student experience and presumably would serve to change the actual learning of the students. As NB commented in her final interview, “I do see a big increase in their fluency in English, comprehension and oral expression” (April 18, 2018). This was bolstered by the remaining participating teachers who repeatedly referenced “increasing interaction”, “increasing confidence” and “increasing engagement”. The use of structured, intentional interaction as an important leverage point for language learners is well-documented in the literature (Bunch, 2006; Verplaetse, 2008; Zwiers, 2006). Further, the move toward learning more about the students as cultural beings both as a way to strengthen relationships and build a caring community of learners as well as a way to impact planning for learning with choices that connect with students and utilize their background is a well-documented element of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014) and, one would argue, high quality curriculum as well. Finally, as Ladson-Billings (2014) indicates, the link between deep understanding of culture and principles of learning is the ‘secret’ behind culturally relevant pedagogy. The growth in knowing the students and being able to target learning and learners seemed to be one of the drivers in the increase that was seen in the intentional instructional strategies used in the last part of this cycle.

**Acting for learning.** As the quality of planning for CLRP increased, so did the quality of the acting for learning in the classroom. According to Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008), co-teachers encounter numerous communication, organization and instructional

issues that need time and space to evolve so it is not surprising that “the most effective means for overcoming the challenges of co-teaching for ELLs is for teachers to engage in ongoing, regularly scheduled collaboration” (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). Due to the intense focus, over time, on their collaboration as well as expanding the time they had to work together to plan for CLRP, teaching partnerships strengthened and enabled them to act together more effectively in tandem to support student learning in the classroom.

The findings of PAR Cycle Two point to the need for continuing more systematic cycles of Plan-Do-Study-Reflect iteratively and then “Act” after deep study of the evidence. Not only did this CPR group change but we started to expand our influence of CLRP in the other professional learning communities to which we belong – administrative or disciplinary. However, as Fall of 2018 interruptions indicate, organizational structures often do not evolve on a teacher timeline. This connects to the leadership literature regarding CLRP.

**Leadership for CLRP.** In their study of two effective inclusion Elementary Schools, Theoharis and O’Toole (2011) found that the approach to quality inclusion could differ significantly and still be effective. What, however, was a non-negotiable was the importance of school leaders and their stance on inclusion. Further, Alton-Lee (2003) underscores that whole-school alignment matters to successful inclusion. It follows that whole-school alignment demands strong, consistent leadership based on principles of inclusion for EAL students (Scanlan & Lopez, 2012). However, as is often the case, with the best of intentions about fully supporting students, administrators opt for exclusion rather than inclusion. Recent decisions to re-structure the school has led to the unintended consequence of this occurring in more classes than used to be the case. That said, these decisions also designated a larger group of teachers to be responsible for the teaching of beginning language learners which may, in turn, foster increasing the skills of all teachers in growing their efficacy to plan and act for linguistic responsiveness. On the other hand, further stretching the capacities of the

Sheltered EAL specialists through these recent structural changes hindered their ability to take on an expanding leadership role in supporting new teachers to increase their understanding and skill in teaching for disciplinary literacy – another element of linguistically responsive teaching. Lastly, leaders definitely need to fully support teacher-generated change efforts; when they have so many organization responsibilities that keep them away from instructional leadership, they often make decisions that do not fully support teachers (Grissom et al., 2013; Grubb & Tredway, 2010).

By connecting the important emerging finds of the PAR project to the literature on PAR, CLRP as well as leadership for CLRP, I use organization theory as the backdrop to further examine the findings.

### **Loose vs. Tight: Organizational Theory**

Imagine that you're either the referee, coach, player or spectator at an unconventional soccer match; the field for the game is round there are several goals scattered haphazardly around the circular field; people can enter and leave the game whenever they want to; they can throw balls in whenever they want; they can say 'that's my goal' whenever they want to . . . (Weick, 1976, p. 1)

Responsiveness, or the ability to nimbly adapt to student diversity and learning needs is at the heart of this action research; in particular, how we focused on how the school and its employees are adapting to the increasing cultural and linguistically diverse student population as they plan and act for equitable, high quality learning. Thus far, as has been discussed, initial findings indicated a lack of overall purposeful responsiveness and, indeed, an unconventional 'game' (like the soccer game above) of co-teaching and learning being played. However, as the rules of the game (or the goals of the SEAL program) became more focused and clarified and the team became more cohesive and co-created new rules, they acted more purposefully and congruently. Below, I discuss the PAR findings through the lens of organizational theory, more specifically discussing how loose coupling as well as key organizational theory explains what unfolded at the conclusion of the project.



We made a conscious organizational decision to move into an ecological co-teaching model to support inclusion and language acquisition for a burgeoning population of beginning English language learners in an English-medium school. However, that decision required a set of practices that most teachers did not yet use. Initially, we were not fully prepared to move into co-teaching because of what Weick (1976) terms loose organizational coupling. The PAR project focused on responsiveness, and loose coupling was initially beneficial because we had the thinking and action space required to personalize our responses and together, as a CPR team, experiment. “A loosely coupled system could preserve more ‘cultural insurance’ . . . preserves more diversity in responding” (Weick, 1976, p. 7).

However, Weick (1976) posits to the argument that in the area of “certification (who does the work) and inspection (how well is the work done)” (p. 11), that looseness in both areas may be dangerous ground on which to tread. This appeared to be the case in the current action research context. With a preponderance of questions about who does what, not to mention what they actually do and the quality of their choices, the dilemma became one of balanced responsiveness. At points in the project, the loose coupling made it possible to use iterative evidence from a few classrooms. However, the administrator who had ultimate decision-making power did not have full knowledge of the PAR results in classrooms and in the foundational documents that were co-created. Thus, at a certain point (Fall 2018), decisions made in the organization in the context of “tightening up” interrupted, at least for the last stages of the research cycle, the forward progress we had made. The use of organizational theory literature helps illuminate some of what potentially underpins this phenomenon at Hayward through the structural and human resource frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Weiss, 1995).

**Structural frame.** As Scott and Davis (2007), point out, a number of different organizational theories operate simultaneously in most organizations. Most are not deliberate

and can only be identified retrospectively. While more than one may be operating in harmony in an organization, the dynamics described within can often cause tension – if for no other reason, because of the paradox they appear to present. On one hand, Hayward is a rational and traditional organization with a formal structure in place that includes a traditional, hierarchical organizational chart with faculty organized according to specialization areas and heads of department in charge of providing formal and informal leadership of these groups. In a large organization like Hayward, structures are meant to coordinate efforts efficiently with specialized job descriptions in order to ensure everyone understands and, presumably, acts in their role to, together, achieve the means of providing high quality education to young people.

But schools are not machines; they are very much a human business. To simply put these types of structures in place and assume that those structures are enough to support the human endeavors necessary for effective responsiveness is folly. As Morgan (2006) points out, mechanistic approaches may work well in stable environments where replication is desired, but they pose severe limitations in organizations where responsiveness or adaptation and flexibility is desired. And in the complex landscape of schools, flexibility is necessary. In particular, as the complexity increased at Hayward, areas of specialization and particular job descriptions without the corresponding relationships necessary to bridge gaps has left teachers with significant questions such as, “Whose job is it?” Further, decision-making processes in the hierarchical sectors of an organization that fail to consult the staff often are not adequately responsive.

Bolman and Deal (2017) elaborate on this in their discussion of the structural frame. As this frame suggests, put the right people in the right places with the right relationships and coordinate their efforts in order to achieve efficiency and accomplish objectives. In this view, structure influences action as it is a “blueprint for officially sanctioned expectations and

exchanges among internal players” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 50). While loose structures can encourage flexibility and participation, in our case, they seem to be leaving too wide a gap for individuals to understand the core principles that should guide their actions. For example, on one hand, the structure of the mainstream curriculum originally guided the Sheltered EAL classes; on the other hand, the belief that the mainstream curriculum needs to be followed in a classroom of non-English speakers – new to the country, new to the school and new to the language of instruction does not position the teachers in the program in a thinking and acting space that encourages them to respond to the students in front of them in order to plan and act effectively for learning. As PB indicated in our Learning Exchange on March 2, “We haven’t known how or if we could change the curriculum in order to respond better to the kids.” MR echoed this sentiment when, in a planning meeting discussing a focus on science fiction in the next unit, she asked: “Do we have the ability to change it?”

Teacher agency in making decisions about curriculum was compounded by the ambiguity that often seemed to be present on the part of the discipline teacher as to what the clear knowledge and understanding goals of even the mainstream curriculum are. As DC pointed out in his reflection after analyzing the transcript of planning meeting #1 in February of 2018, he was looking to the organization for structure and clarity: “I believe the key to success going forward is structure and clarity. At this point, it seems a lot of the ideas about the role of the SEAL program and its teachers, the flexibility of the curriculum and the goals of the entire system are mostly built on opinion . . . we must establish a strong foundation and clearly defined goals.” Absent that, in hierarchical organizations, teachers typically flounder and do not often exhibit agency to make changes. Further, during the Learning Exchange, we discussed at length what was driving the planning for the Sheltered EAL classes. The collaborative admission that disciplinary content drove the planning as opposed to the acquisition of English and use of academic English for learning was greeted with nods

around the table. Nevertheless, as the CPR team came together and clarified the goals and roles through the CLE and subsequent planning for learning and creation of foundational documents, the evidence indicates success in acting for learning according to significant principles which have evolved through building the relationships within the CPR team and coordinating efforts in order to accomplish goals.

Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith (1994) in their discussion of systems thinking within organizations, highlight that structures do not always emerge as a result of conscious thinking or decision-making, but simply by the choices people either consciously or unconsciously make over time. While our teachers made conscious decisions about what to do in the moment, they had not been guided by consciously co-creating core principles to accomplish the goals of the program. In fact, as was seen at the start of PAR Cycle Two, the principle actors involved in the program did not have any clarity about what the actual priority goals were. We experienced organizational tension. On one hand, we had departmental structures in place and a new co-teaching model in an effort to pair a language acquisition expert with a disciplinary expert, but we did so without thinking deeply about supporting the ‘how’ this was to take place. In what time? With what planning structures and roles and responsibilities? While there has been a great deal riding on individuals having the right kinds of discussions and choosing the best actions and a great faith in their ability to do so, often, misguided judgments and a general feeling of a lack of structures in place to support the important work resulted.

A turning point in the research came when we paused and opened up space through a CLE to clarify goals, roles and responsibilities and increase the structures in place to support planning and acting for learning based on that clarification. This action to provide a structured reflective space resulted in increasing efficacy and productivity – and a sense of pride in the work on the part of the participating CPR members. As Scott and Davis (2007)

discuss, evidence points to teacher productivity as a source of efficacy that promotes satisfaction at work, which connects Bolman and Deal's (2017) human resource frame.

**Human resource frame.** The human resource frame argues that fostering self-managing teams that are responsible for meaningful work and have the resources and collective responsibility for results is critical to team success. However, lack of structures that align appropriate resources and understanding of collective responsibility can hinder the ability of teams to respond effectively to meaningful work. "If structure is overlooked, an organization often misdirects energy and resources" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 68). At the start of the PAR, we added additional human resources in the last year, but observations indicated an overwhelmingly large percentage of the planning and teaching time used the "One Teaching, One Drifting" model of co-teaching. Drifting is, undoubtedly, a misdirected use of energy and resources. Yet, following the CLE and more focused, principle-based planning for learning, co-teachers were better aligned in identifying and using resources and taking collective responsibility. Bolman and Deal (2017) in their conversation of successful restructuring indicate the importance of developing a strong understanding of structures and processes with equal understanding and ownership of the roles and relationships expected to attain the collective goals. Through the iterative PDS-Reflection cycle over the course of the Spring of 2018, we were able to increase our collective understanding, clarify roles and responsibilities and create deeper, more dynamic relationships among the team in order to bring about desired results. However, after the structural, organizational changes in Fall 2018 with a growing team, it was unclear how tighter coupling inside the overall middle school team intersected with those working closely with the beginning language learners.

### **Institutional Complexity**

Weiss (1995) shares findings in a landmark study focused on shared decision-making (SDM) that reinforces how isomorphism often permeates institutions such as schools. As a

result, the institution can override the interests, ideology and information or knowledge of the organizational actors within the institution. In the case of this particular PAR, overwhelming evidence indicated that the CPR team possessed self-interest in their own growth and the belonging and growth of their students and that this was situated in a growing team ideology that embraced the right of all of our culturally and linguistically diverse students to access high quality, responsive teaching and learning. Further, through our work as a PLC, we were growing in our understanding of the principles and practices of CLRP and how to plan and act for learning based on them. However, as Weiss (1995) points out, “The culture and arrangements of the organization, in short, strongly affect how latent predispositions and understandings are interpreted . . .” (p. 578). By tightening the scheduling and organization of the students, the institution inadvertently impacted the SEAL program and the teachers within it, sending conflicting messages about the priority of enacting quality CLRP within the school as well as about collective inquiry driving evidence-based decision-making. While there is hope that the deep learning and commitment that the CPR team accomplished can enable the forward momentum for CLRP and evidence-based collective inquiry (PAR) to resume, Weiss’ findings underscore the need for the institution to look for ways to strengthen the interests, values and knowledge of our practitioners in these important areas in order to “overcome the “drag” of the institution” (Weiss, 1995, p. 588).

In this section, I connected the findings from PAR Cycle Two to the existing literature and organizational theories including elaborating on how elements of organizational complexity can interrupt progress –even progress that has significant momentum. In the following section, I discuss the leadership transformation that was significant during this PAR Cycle.

## **Leadership Transformation**

This focus has been so much more rewarding this cycle than the last -- the time to work with the teachers was KEY and IS key. I am excited to see what these changes in practice yield for higher quality, more equitable practice and access/engagement in learning for students. (Powell, reflective memo, March 2, 2018).

The above quote, taken from my reflective memo immediately following the Community Learning Exchange, reflects some of the insight I had in terms of leadership for learning. These are the key factors: I focused on those closest to the problems of practice; I maintained a positive belief that increasing teacher efficacy results in increasingly effective practice for high quality, equitable learning for students; and remained persistent/consistent – that is systematically organized and focused with feedback and evidence-based decisions. During the course of the PAR cycle, we made significant strides in the direction of Dewey’s (1938) advice: “The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction” (p. 58). Next, I review the leadership transformation and lessons that surfaced for me during the course of the spring of 2018 and then, further in Fall 2018 as our progress met with organizational decisions that interrupted progress.

### **Leadership Lessons: Spring 2018**

During the course of this cycle, I remained committed to using evidence to inform iterative decisions (Spillane, 2012), and in systematically asking for and ensuring the voices of the CPR teachers were providing the impetus and commitment for next steps. I made the considered decision to let go of the second hoped-for CPR group of administrators examining the wider structures. I did so because I knew it was important to focus where I had the most action space to make a difference – and that was certainly with the teachers who are interacting on a daily basis with the students. In doing so, we were able to make a difference in teacher practice and, in turn, increased their efficacy and pride in what they are seeing in their students and student learning; this was cause for celebration. As MR indicated to me in

personal communication: “Dear Christie, thank you too for giving us this opportunity as participants. I really believe that this discussion brings us to become more effective and reflective teachers, collaborators, and colleagues. Really appreciate this. Sincerely, Maria” (personal email, February 21, 2018). And from NB: “Thank you; in no other observations do we get this kind of detailed feedback on what good teaching looks like” (personal communication, February 21, 2018). These sentiments were echoed by other members of the CPR team in various communication as well as in the final transcribed interviews reflecting on their increasing growth and efficacy.

In a February 21 memo following the debriefing conversations with teachers coding their planning meetings, I wrote the following:

It is clear that there are a number of overarching pieces that need to be developed to drive what this program is, how it works, what its purpose is and, as a result, how we make our decisions about most value-added actions in order to impact student learning. Some of the questions that have come up include: How are we using translanguaging in a purposeful way in order to increase and sustain cognitive engagement while focusing on language acquisition? How can we evolve the curriculum and approach to teaching and learning for these SEAL classes in order to achieve our vision/purpose? How can we define the roles in order to make the most of our human resources to impact student learning in the classrooms? Using “How might we . . .” question stems to drive the inquiry and development is important. I need to look and see which CLE protocols would best work to accomplish our goals.

What is particularly important to me with regard to the PAR Cycle Two (Spring 2018) is that I did just that as leader. I was more intentional in interjecting my knowledge base in conjunction with on-going evidence collection and collective decision-making with the CPR group. We were on the verge of co-creating, on the basis of our experiences of the course of the year, the type of informed foundational documents that provide direction and coherence for teachers to practice increasing CLRP within the SEAL program. As the model was set to change for the following year and an additional six disciplinary teachers became SEAL teachers, it was a timely and supportive way to use what we’ve learned to support increasing efficacy of those teachers. In this cycle, we placed emphasis on students as a



whole and, further, on individual students – which is, of course, the focus of student-centered teaching and learning and, certainly, on culturally and linguistically responsive practice.

In this way, I was learning to embrace and model the role of a participatory action researcher as characterized by Stringer (2014). I was a catalyst for change, stimulating them through the use of objective evidence (“Mapping the Class”, transcripts of planning meetings and classroom observations) to code, analyze, and make change decisions. Seeing the clear impact of evidence-based decision making, it is a leadership practice I intend to use for the remainder of my professional life. However, it also gives rise to a dilemma as I contemplate how to scale this in our organization or even within my own role in the organization. As is indicated in my reflective memos, it was a rewarding experience, but one that was long in coming and the level of perseverance, detail and time that was necessary to bring it about was significant – it was both exhilarating . . . and exhausting.

Whew . . . 6 hours of a learning exchange -- it was a great exchange of ideas and amazing to me that it has taken us so long to get this on a schedule and do it - two years into this program (or at least 18 months) and it really wasn't being developed on good principles of learning, language acquisition or any other principles -- perhaps survival. But it's hugely complex and next year we will have even more teachers teaching this course -- and the courses aren't even set up in terms of why, what or how. Despite the increased human resources there is lots and lots to be done! (memo, March 2, 2018).

Never before have I been so systematic with the recording and sharing of evidence to reflect on what IS and make that a driver for understanding and action. It's been powerful . . . it's also been exhausting! (memo, April 20, 2018).

As I contemplate this dilemma, what I am most thankful for is having the experience to stretch myself and to model to others how communities come together to solve problems of practice through the use of evidence.

Further, as I internalized the power of CLE protocols to uncover the wisdom in the room and lead to powerful, co-constructed paths forward, I began to use that to formulate a new path for professional learning for our teachers for the coming year (Guajardo et al., 2016). The learning plan included the introduction of Adaptive Schools to Hayward in

training teachers and leaders in using Adaptive Schools protocols to activate and engage, explore and discover, and organize and integrate with participants in teams at all levels of our organization. I foresaw this as a way to expand the understanding and power of protocols that honored the wisdom of our own people to uncover solutions to our problems of practice. The first weekend of Adaptive Schools learning took place in September of 2018 and was attended by nearly 50 participants from Hayward and beyond. Participants reported positive learning, and they have begun the implementation of these protocols to structure the interaction of their teams as well as to implement in the classroom for learning. We used the protocols to unpack the new Guiding Statements for 550+ employees. Our fifteen learning cohorts are being facilitated by faculty using these protocols focusing on participant interaction and funds of knowledge. In this way, the leadership transformation that began as a member of this ECU Learning Cohort is finding its way from my particular PAR project to other areas of my learning and leadership work. I have outlined the positive impact on my leadership transition that was particularly acute during Spring 2018. Next, I discuss how the interruptions to continuing our progress in Fall, 2018 have also led to some powerful learning about leadership.

### **Leadership Lessons: Fall 2018**

As positive and powerful as the leadership lessons were over the course of the spring, as we looked forward to continuing our success over the course of the fall in a third action research cycle, organizational factors provided both challenges and opportunities to our continued leadership. In the following paragraphs, I discuss those challenges and opportunities.

**Challenges.** One challenge over the course of the PAR project, evident in PAR Cycle One, was how I could engage in shared leadership for the SEAL program. Early on in the PAR project, the new divisional principal was invited to be a part of the CPR team. As the

leader of the division, she was seen as an integral player in how it played out. However, she was also tasked with the Herculean goal of creating a positive, functioning middle school from the bottom up. She set about doing so with gusto and the best of intentions, and with the PAR project in mind such as when she used the principles of CLRP to conduct classroom walkthroughs with the Heads of Department. However, the exigencies of the role made it impossible for her to fully participate in PAR Cycle Two. Thus, during the course of PAR Cycle Two, guided by the tenets of PAR itself, I focused on the teachers rather than the leaders because I thought we needed a successful effort based solidly on evidence to make the case for change. However, while the successes in Spring 2018 gave rise to overwhelming evidence that those closest the focus of practice are, indeed, those who are best situated to move us forward, other administrative decisions were made. These created organizational conditions that may have had some promise in the spread of our new and improved understandings and practices in the SEAL program by involving more people but, nevertheless, interrupted forward progress for the five CPR teachers.

**Opportunities.** As always, we learn from all experiences. I am committed to working with administrative leaders to ensure that organizational structures – from scheduling of the days and calendar to the clustering of students are carefully weighed in terms of opportunities and challenges. I need to ask questions about how decisions impact the most marginalized students (beginning EAL students). As Weiss (1995) points out in her study on shared decision making (SDM), the institution in which the decision-making sits exerts incredible influence on the decisions that are made and, “old patterns of thought and behavior are hard to overcome” (p. 588). Yet, as we continue to move forward, I am reminded that there is not an end to the work of balancing the structural with the human resource frame. As well, the organization, in attempts to be more coherent and responsive, does need to know how to make authentic evidence-based decisions. My work as an action researcher has prepared me

to coach others to engage in more authentic evidence-based decision-making. I have learned to take heart at the amazing progress that can be made when focused on building relationships, honoring voices, analyzing evidence, and co-creating new ways forward with valued colleagues.

### **Chapter Summary**

In Chapter 6, I discussed the significant wins of PAR Cycle Two that included a wealth of evidence supporting the PDSA cycle as a valuable, evidence-based way to impact teacher professional learning, decision-making and enactment of principles of high-quality learning – including CLRP. I have also underscored ways in which the institution can both intentionally and unintentionally interrupt the momentum of progress, and I have connected both of these areas to extant research and literature including organizational theory. I presented an overview of my evolving leadership transformation as a result of my involvement as a research practitioner in this PAR. While results of the PAR are mixed, this *is* a story of hope with the transfer of the tents of PAR and leadership for it, to other areas of the organization. There remains a high probability that this particular PAR, enacted over the course of 18 months, can still have a lasting impact on the ways in which this organization works and learns together as colleagues in pursuit of equitable outcomes for students. In the following chapter, I bring the threads together as I seek to summarize the overall findings and discuss the implications and limitations of this work.

## **CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) project took place over two cycles of inquiry from August 2017 to December 2018 at a large Southeast Asian American International School. The focus of practice was: building the capacity of middle school teachers to understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice (CLRP) to improve the affective and cognitive learning of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student body, in particular in a Sheltered EAL (SEAL) program. Through enlisting a core group of middle school SEAL teachers (n=5) to work together as a co-practitioner research team (CPR), the evidence supports how teachers changed to both plan for learning and then act for learning in the classroom. Increasing understanding of the principles of CLRP and socio-cultural theory, in turn, increased collaboration in our strong professional learning community (PLC). By analyzing evidence -- mediated through community learning exchange (CLE) protocols and PAR improvement science principles of plan-do-study-act -- we were able to make decisions (Bryk et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016). As a result, teachers better understood what was and was not happening in their planning meetings and classrooms to support the learning needs of students who were culturally and linguistically diverse. Armed with those understandings, significant changes began to take place that increased the quality of teacher planning and, in turn, the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. In the wake of substantial progress, however, organizational complexities interrupted the cascading and transfer of the new understandings and practices. Nevertheless, we created foundational documents based on principles of CLRP and socio-cultural theory for the school and the Sheltered EAL teachers at the school had increased clarity and awareness about the purpose of the SEAL program and the principles of CLRP themselves.

There is rising hope, even amid the setbacks of Fall 2018, that increasingly positive impact is not only possible, but probable.

In section one of the chapter, I review and summarize what happened over the course of the PAR project beginning with the original focus of practice (FOP) arising from the context and connect that to issues of equity. In section two, I detail the actions and claims of PAR Cycles One and Two while explicating how each cycle was an iterative process flowing from the findings of the previous work. Following that discussion, I analyze the claims using extant theory and research that led from a theory OF action (TOA) to a theory IN action (TIA), and analyze the research questions that guided the PAR project in relation to the TIA. The TIA now underpins the ongoing work. In section three, I examine the impact on my leadership understandings and stances in order to internalize how this has transformed me as an international school leader committed to equity. Finally, before concluding, I posit the implications the claims have for research, policy and practice.

### **Participatory Action Research: An Iterative Process**

In this section, I briefly overview how the Focus of Practice (FOP) for the project rose from the context of the school in Spring 2017. Over the course of Fall 2017– Fall 2018, I relied on the original TOA and aim statement to focus the work, but, as the project evolved, and is characteristic of action research, I needed to respond to the organizational context and participants. As I discuss the iterative process, I detail what actually did take place to move the project forward in each of the PAR cycles as emerging themes in Par Cycle One became claims in Par Cycle Two.

#### **Focus of Practice: Arising from Context**

Hayward International School is a large (approximately 3,000 students) school that is situated in a dynamic and competitive city in South-East Asia. Originally international schools, including Hayward, served primarily the expatriate population of the country in

which they were situated. However, recent economic changes have seen the number of expatriates decrease, while, at the same time, there has been an increase in the number of middle-class families in SE Asia with the means and will to send their children to expensive private international schools as a gateway to Western Universities and social mobility. Increasing numbers of CLD students attend international schools, in particular large numbers of beginning English Language Learners (ELL) (Weschler, 2017). Such has been the case at Hayward where the ELL population has more than doubled in the past 2.5 years. This, with a primarily Western trained and young faculty, not yet well-versed in supporting an increasingly diverse and complex student body to access equitable, quality teaching and learning. Not uncommon in international schools as is noted by Pearce (2013).

### **Spring 2017**

In Spring 2017, several threads came together concurrently to point to the need to examine how we could support the teachers in understanding and utilizing CLRP to provide quality learning to the increasingly diverse language learning student body. As required by the International Baccalaureate, one thread was a cross-divisional and cross-disciplinary curriculum inquiry team (CIT) focused on developing guiding statements for literacy as well a language policy. Through multiple iterative processes, we established that teachers were not fully meeting the needs of beginning language learners particularly in the middle and high schools because they needed more professional development to understand how to respond. Spring 2017 reading data indicated significant drops in reading scores across grades 6-10. And, at the same time, school-wide survey results from parents, teachers and students indicated a lack of faith that all students' learning needs were equitably being met, that teachers had the efficacy or even will to do so, and that students were feeling disenfranchised (VOP, VOE, VOS, 2017). Further, the recent adoption of the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core + Standards Frameworks for both mathematics and language arts

underscored the need for all teachers to understand the role literacy played in academic understanding in all discipline areas and for all students – in particular those who were beginning language learners (Bunch, 2013; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).

With all indicators pointing to the fact that the numbers of language learners year-on-year were going to increase, the evidence pointed to a real and pressing need within the context of Hayward that was the focus of practice (FOP). At that point, with a need to pull together an initial CPR team, I reached out to all those who were participating in the curriculum inquiry work and received six expressions of interest including both English heads of department, the director of EAL, the Middle Years Programme Coordinator, a MS English teacher and the MS/HS Academic Counselor. While pleased with the interest from a variety of areas, I realized that we needed to narrow the FOP to a particular area of the school in order to ensure it remained manageable and addressed the work deeply enough. We needed an successful internal model that could scale to other parts of the school. Thus, the FOP became: “How can we build the capacity of middle school SEAL teachers to understand and utilize culturally and linguistically responsive practice to impact the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse?”

### **Participatory Action Research Cycles**

With this backdrop, PAR Cycle One began with a CPR team that was comprised of MR, the head of department for English in the middle school; RB, the Director of English as an Additional Language (EAL); SK, the new middle school principal; and the lead researcher. I formed the original team with a focus on the middle school SEAL teachers and an evidence base that points to the importance of leadership in establishing a vision and delivery model to support diverse learners (Scanlan & Lopez, 2012). The focus at the start of the PAR cycles was to increase understanding of the principles of CLRP throughout the middle school and to enlist both the CPR team and, upon acceptance of the invitation to



partake in the research, participating teachers in examining and enacting increasingly effective practices aligned to these principles in the SEAL classrooms.

**Actions: PAR Cycle One.** PAR Cycle One occurred from August–December 2017, beginning with a CPR meeting to engage in dialogue around a synthesis of CLRP principles (see Appendix D) and a discussion about how they might best be introduced to the faculty of the middle school in order to begin to ascertain their level of understanding. Once the CPR team had initial ideas (e.g., the use of particular principles to conduct classroom walkthroughs with heads of department to look for visible indicators), I began to meet with potential teacher participants including the Language and Literature department, the EAL department and all of the teachers currently teaching in the SEAL program (n=28). During the course of the meetings, five teachers agreed to participate, all of whom were teaching in the SEAL program: MR, head of the English department and disciplinary teacher of the SEAL English class; PB, member of the individuals and societies department and disciplinary SEAL humanities teacher; and NB, CM, and DC who were all new members of faculty and were the designated Sheltered EAL teachers for grades 8, 7 and 6, respectively. I also met with the middle school heads of department to engage them in a protocol to explore the principles of CLRP. Additionally, I facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) with all members of the Sheltered and Mainstream EAL department to explore elements of CLRP and a structured audio-taped discussion with the three participating SEAL teachers; in addition, I conducted initial classroom observations of each SEAL teacher and co-teaching partners MR and PB.

**Emerging themes.** During the initial cycle of research, two emerging themes surfaced. First, in general, while there were high levels of empathy and connection among the Sheltered EAL and Mainstream EAL faculty for the beginning language learners, the teachers had low levels of deep understanding of the principles of CLRP or their responsibility for

them; there was little visible implementation of them in the classrooms. Secondly, the significant complexities in the learning culture and structure of the school hindered significant attention or decision-making to focus on what *was* actually known in order to enact principles of CLRP in the classroom and in the school at large. PAR Cycle One served primarily as a process to more deeply explore the context and the significant players in order to ascertain the most value-added path forward with the participants closest to the FOP.

**Resulting decisions.** As a result of these findings, as well as the professionals who stepped forward to formally take part in the action research project, I made a number of decisions to focus the PAR Cycle Two:

- Build a significant professional learning community with the participating teacher CPR team – those closest to the FOP.
- Foster understanding of visible indicators in CLRP through two cycles of observing co-planning and co-teaching in the SEAL classrooms with a purposeful CLE scheduled in between the two cycles of observation.
- Write semi-structured reflections, memos, and conduct a final semi-structured interview with all participating teachers.

**Actions: Par Cycle Two.** PAR Cycle Two occurred from January-October 2018. The cycle for the spring semester (January-May 2018) was a tightly structured collaborative inquiry that involved all participating CPR team members. We began with a CLE protocol in which the participants conducted a “Mapping the Class” engagement to ascertain the teachers’ levels of understanding of their students in order to drive planning and acting for learning. I observed planning meetings between the co-teachers, conducted classroom observations, and wrote corresponding reflective memos. After the first round of observations and subsequent evidence analysis, I co-planned and facilitated a CLE, followed by another round of planning and classroom observations. We concluded in April 2018 with semi-

structured interviews with all participating SEAL teachers. I coded the spring evidence and shared with the CPR team throughout the January-May part of the cycle in order deduce patterns and themes that effectively informed next steps – a hallmark of participatory action research (Morales, 2016) and the improvement science cycle of Plan-Do-Study-Act (Bryk et al., 2015).

***Emerging themes.*** From this process, we had strong evidence for three emerging themes:

1. A critical component in planning effectively for learning is clarity in the priorities and learning goals for the learning and students by fully knowing the students.
2. Increasing the quality of planning for learning (by providing clarity) impacted the quality of acting for learning in the classroom.
3. Involving teachers in reflecting on evidence through the coding processes and subsequent discussions, was a powerful change agent.

As Stringer (2014) points out, the primary purpose of action research is to “provide the means for people to engage in systematic inquiry and investigation to design an appropriate way of accomplishing a desired goal and to evaluate its effectiveness” (p. 6). The evidence collected from the initial part of PAR Cycle Two provided that means and a change in enacting the principles of CLRP in the SEAL classroom increased equitable access to high quality learning – a change that was visible and celebrated.

***Resulting decisions.*** The increasing clarity with regard to principles of CLRP, including that of building caring communities of learners and planning with cultural and linguistic diversity in mind, led to the participating SEAL teachers making much more effective decisions as they planned and acted for learning in the classroom. As a result, we decided to solidify that clarity and work as a professional learning community team to create foundational documents that would guide existing and new teachers in making decisions. We

created guiding statements encapsulating the important principles of CLRP and clearer guidelines for unit development, co-teaching responsibilities, and routines and classroom expectations. We anticipated working with the new group of SEAL teachers who would join the school in August of 2018. Plans for a CLE with all participating SEAL teachers (n=12) took shape (see Appendix R) and hope for the transference of leadership of this particular action research project to the CPR team members and Director of EAL was promising.

**Fall 2018 interruptions.** From August to October of 2018, we attempted to enact PAR Cycle Three, but, indeed, that did not fully happen, and I have attached the brief cycle in the fall (August to October 2018) to PAR Cycle Two findings. While we had energy at the start of the school year to forge ahead with plans, by mid-September, the energy had dissipated both because of institutional decisions that, for the time, interrupted our forward progress, but also because of competing institutional demands on the involved teachers. In August, I facilitated an initial CLE with all returning and new members of the SEAL teaching team, including the CPR team members. Following that, we decided to hold a weekly meeting on Friday afternoons using CLE protocols to build capacity by using the knowledge learned from the last cycle to further increase the use of CLRP to plan and act for high quality learning. We hoped that we could expand to every SEAL class and spread and underpin practice throughout the disciplinary departments. Quickly, however, competing demands at the start of the year, atomized structures and leadership, and overwhelm on the part of the participating Sheltered EAL teachers and others were significant barriers to continuing the collaborative, structured inquiry that had moved us to this stage. The complexity of the organization trying to find its way in the midst of increased ELL students and 80+ new teachers across the school unwittingly compromised the work we had accomplished in the spring. At the completion of the PAR cycles, we have not been able to

fully move the work forward; however, we created institutional documents and a vision of what to do. It may take some time to fully implement what we learned.

In this section, I provided an overview of eighteen months of learning work that reflects the focus of this PAR project including reviewing the actions, resulting evidence, emerging themes and iterative decisions for forward steps. In the next section, I connect the emerging themes to existing theory and research in order to come to a Theory IN Action (TIA) with regard to this particular action research in this particular context. Part of that discussion revisits the original research questions to, in turn, posit in what ways the work on this particular PAR continues as well as how the mediating CLE processes continue as part of the inquiry stance that has taken root at Hayward.

### **From a Theory OF Action (TOA) to a Theory IN Action (TIA)**

In the previous section, I discussed an overview of the entire PAR project including actions, evidence, emerging themes and iterative decision making. In this section, I present the key claims from this research support and offer a Theory IN Action that can be used in order to support ongoing action research work in this context. In doing so, I examine the original Theory of Action including those areas the research supports as well as the gaps that the findings point out. Then, I connect the claims to existing theory and literature in order to support the creation of a new Theory IN Action.

### **Original TOA and Drivers**

In the original theory of action, unequivocal evidence substantiated that the focus of practice was and continues to be a real and pressing issue for the teachers and student learning at Hayward. At the start of the project, and in keeping with the important principles of action research, the focus was and continued to evolve toward working with the teachers closest to the problem of practice – those in the SEAL program. By involving a small committed group of teachers and focusing on their learning and understanding, I thought we

could model processes that would be sustainable and scalable across the wider school and, eventually, link increasing CLRP practice to the affective and cognitive learning of our culturally and linguistically diverse student body. This level of focus and iterative cycles of inquiry is underpinned by the literature surrounding impactful professional learning for teachers (Hunter et al., 2013; Savage et al., 2011; Timperly & Alton-Lee, 2008). However, I knew from the outset that approaching the focus of practice with the community learning exchange axioms and protocols and the improvement science processes was not a schoolwide decision. In fact, I was experimenting with these in a smaller group hoping to use them more widely as the project went on.

Teachers and their commitment to the implementation of improved teacher practice as a result of evidence-based learning was a strength of the original TOA and of the drivers of the change. However, when constructing this TOA and considering the challenges and assets as well as the drivers for change, the challenge of the school learning culture and, in particular, the organizational resources and structures were, perhaps, not considered deeply enough to understand how those complexities might interrupt the cascading and transfer of the significant learning that did take place among the small, committed CPR team. I have briefly overviewed the original TOA including pointing out both the strengths and the gaps considered when initially analyzing the drivers for change. Following, I discuss the three claims of the PAR points and connect them to the extant literature and research.

### **Key Claims and Extant Literature**

Interestingly, as seen in the literature review provided in Chapter 2, there are gaps in what was initially thought to be important research and theory for the PAR project. The research on language theory and socio-cultural theory is substantial and underpins many of the important elements of culturally and linguistically responsive practice. The literature on school conditions that support language learning, including leadership, and the research on

teacher professional learning and PLCs supported our direction moving forward. However, the literature on how to implement CLRP in organizational complexity and theory, change theory, or the complex dynamics of co-teaching was not as evident. Nevertheless, the claims are connected to existing theory and research, and I discuss three key claims:

1. Quality planning for learning leads to better quality acting for learning.
2. Evidence and collaborative inquiry are powerful agents for change.
3. Organizational complexity sidetracks teacher inquiry and action when the inquiry process is not a part of the entire organization.

**Quality planning for learning leads to better quality acting for learning.** In the initial stages of the PAR, both planning observations and classroom observations indicated gaps in what was driving the planning and acting for learning in the classroom. The teachers lacked understanding about who and what should be driving the planning for learning. However, with increasing clarity on knowing students and becoming more familiar with CLRP practices and how to translate their knowledge and increasing skill to a co-teaching model, they changed how they planned for learning. The planning for learning became more laser-focused on what mattered most and that transferred into much higher quality classroom practice.

**Knowledge of students.** The existing literature abounds with research and theory that supports deep knowledge of students as being a significant driver in planning for learning (Gay, 2013; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 2014; Razfar et al., 2011). A host of evidence supported the importance of building warm caring relationships with students, which, in turn, ties into Krashen's (1983) affective filter hypothesis as well as the research on the impact of affective factors on academic achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Boykin & Noguera, 2010; Phakti et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2004). Despite the knowledge base, originally teachers paid little heed to student backgrounds – cultural or linguistic –in

order to choose texts, contexts or mediate or scaffold learning for students during either planning or acting for learning in the classroom.

*Instructional triangle.* Little (2006), describes the instructional triangle as, “the dynamic, fluid, and complex interactions by which teachers help children learn challenging subject content and pursue other important intellectual and social goals” (p. 4). The triangle embeds teacher, student and content within a broader learning environment that includes the relationships between and among those factors. Because this triangle speaks to the complexity of the learning landscape for teachers as they consider various factors in planning and acting for learning, including knowledge of students, Little (2006) provides a powerful model in which to root teacher professional learning. The work of the PAR – focused on building a professional learning community with a small group of committed professionals focused on a problem of practice and willing to use evidence to reframe how they planned and enacted instruction for a diverse group of language learners – is a small, but useful success story. The success story is rooted in how to construct professional development within the instructional triangle, using the CLE pedagogical approaches and the improvement sciences iterative evidence, as way to increase teacher’s knowledge of content, particularly important language and literacy development expertise; and teachers’ knowledge about students and their ability to positively use their relationships with students to become increasingly responsive warm demanders in the area of academic learning (Hammond, 2015). The process we co-designed, co-implemented and co-analyzed grounded our work in culturally responsive practice within the situated context (Sleeter, 2012) rather than reducing it to a list of pre-packaged best-practice strategies. The additional challenge within the current model is to intersect the instructional triangle with the overlay of an additional teacher within the co-teaching classroom. This may be a further avenue for research.



While the original instructional triangle was useful as a starting place for our thinking, as we worked our way through the complexities of student knowledge and CLRP practices and co-teaching, we realized that the interrelationships between students, teachers and content were much more complex.

**Evidence and collaborative inquiry are powerful agents for change.** During PAR Cycle Two, we implemented the systematic inquiry cycle of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) with a laser-like focus on collecting evidence (classroom maps of what teachers knew about students, transcriptions of planning meetings, and classroom observations) and involving the CPR team in the analysis of the evidence to inform next steps (Bryk et al., 2015). Not only did this objective analysis of evidence give rise to the cognitive dissonance that research indicates is required for teachers to change practice, but it further made real to the teachers the research base of inquiry-based effective professional learning. We grew increasingly more competent at embedding literacy learning in disciplinary content (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011; Gleeson & Davidson, 2016; Timperly & Alton-Lee, 2008). By making consistent use of the inquiry cycle to collect and analyze evidence we laid the groundwork for the co-construction of the CLE that took place in March and was a turning point in our work as a team. We were learning to learn in public and lean heavily into the wisdom of the place and people through planning processes that were “collaborative generative, and dialogical” (Guajardo et al., 2016). The generative change in planning for learning and then acting for learning in the classroom provided further evidence that these mediating processes, emanating from contextual evidence, are powerful agents for change. Evidence-based, reflective practitioners learn and grow both individually and collectively when they collaboratively engage, have the right processes and tools to do so, and make sense of their learning together.

**Organizational complexity can interrupt teacher inquiry and action.** This is particularly true when the inquiry process is not a part of the entire organization. “. . . [O]nly when we get both the personal and the institutional dimensions of reform right will our schools be able to change” (Grubb & Tredway, 2010). As was discussed in claim two, the collaborative, evidence-based inquiry of a small group of committed CPR team members illustrated powerful change – in three classrooms with five teachers. But the sustainability and scalability of hard-earned understanding through the collective decision making that characterized the work of PAR Cycle Two in Spring 2018 became, by Fall 2018, dependent on the organizational context. Indeed, when the inquiry process is not part of the entire organization, the probability of disruption can be high. Viewing this interruption of forward movement in the inquiry process, I use five frames to explain what happened: Weiss’s (1995) work on the four “I’s” of school reform; Elmore’s (2004) concept of cohesion and atomization in conjunction with a fourth stage of school cohesion and collaboration, pre-atomization, proposed by Grubb and Tredway (2010); how the institutional culture can pervade and hinder the spread of even promising practice as well as through organizational theory, specifically Bolman and Deal’s (2017) structural frame; and Wood’s (2010) discussion on the realities of PLCs. I outline the connection to each of these areas of theory and research.

*Weiss’ 4 “I’s”.* Weiss (1995), in her empirical research on shared decision making (SDM), discussed how interests, ideology, information and institution affected a promising educational reform. Certainly, participatory action research shares some characteristics of SDM on a small scale. Her discussion on the impact of the institutional “I” had the most import to this research. In short, institutional culture, including norms and structures, has great power to shape the beliefs, actions and values of the actors within it even in the face of what might be an empowering reform – such as SDM or PAR. Some institutional norms –

like the disciplinary curriculum has to be covered, the edicts of the principal must be followed, imposed structures cannot be questioned – are all examples of the institutional drag that Weiss (1995) explores. These elements were strong influences in our school context that hindered our proposed use of what we had learned and practiced with new teachers in the SEAL program and interrupted our forward progress.

***Elmore’s atomization.*** Elmore (2004) in discussing the important element of cohesion as a factor in school reform forwards three levels – atomized, emerging cohesion and fully cohesive and collaborative. In an atomized school, teachers operate independently, there are few systemic structures for teacher collaboration and a hierarchical leadership structure is maintained. Grubb and Tredway (2010) go a step further and suggest a fourth level: pre-atomized. One of the dimensions of the pre-atomized school that is useful for this discussion is that of disorganization including a “response to external demands [that] is often chaotic and superficial” (Grubb & Tredway, 2010, p. 157). In the case of the PAR, the elements of both atomization and pre-atomization levels (few structures for teacher collaboration, not questioning structural leadership decisions such as the clustering of students as well as the historical chaotic and superficial response to the increasing numbers of language learners and SEAL teachers) impacted both the cohesion within the school and our ability to capitalize on sustaining and scaling teacher participation in making significant progress on the PAR focus of practice.

***Bolman and Deal’s structural frame.*** At its foundation, Bolman and Deal’s (2017) discussion of the structural frame calls for putting the right people in the right places and in the right relationships in order to coordinate efforts and achieve objectives. All very rational. Nevertheless, if structure is ineffective or relationships do not flourish, the benefits of the structures that are in place are often lost. Particularly in the case of increasing growth and changes in the learning environment that we have experienced at Hayward; the complexity of

the changes in student demographics and the increase in the number of SEAL teachers overwhelmed our efforts to share what we had learned with other staff. As Bolman and Deal (2017) state: “As work becomes more complex or the environment gets more turbulent, structure must also develop more multifaceted and lateral forms of communication and coordination” (p. 116). The challenges that an organization faces if unsuccessful are lack of clarity and accountability as well as the misdirection of energy and resources. The implementation of a co-teaching model at Hayward without the corresponding structures and clarity of responsibilities and accountability necessary to support that structure is one such example of how an institutional response can compromise forward progress by instituting structures and systems that do not fully support teachers. Co-teaching is its own challenge, but without institutional support in scheduling time for co-planning and supporting teacher reflection, it most certainly cannot flourish (Dove & Honigsfed, 2010; Nordmeyer, 2008).

*Wood’s PLC realities.* PLCs have long been touted as a formidable change agent within schools (Dufour, 2004; Kruse et al., 1994; Little, 2006). However, questions about their ultimate success and sustainability are raised by Wood (2010) due to several of the same barriers that arose in Fall 2018. First, the lack of focus and coherence of schools’ learning work is often visible through the large number of initiatives competing for energy and time; and second, as observed in Weiss’ (1995) finding on SDM, the tension between participatory action research as an avenue for collaborative decision-making within a PLC and the more traditional hierarchical decision-making that dominates the organization, may supplant PLC progress (pp. 47-48). Both of these characteristics have led, in the case of the PAR, to general feelings of overwhelm. Overwhelm occurred in several places: the Directors who are embroiled in the implementation of a new strategic plan and Intensive Language Academy, the MS Principal who was charged with the development of a new middle school and was only in her second year, and the Sheltered EAL teachers for whom well-intended, top-down

structural decisions created less than optimal conditions for their ability support co-planning in four different disciplinary preps with four different colleagues not to mention to transfer their learning of Spring 2018 to new colleagues in a supportive collaborative space.

I examined the organizational complexities at Hayward that have impeded the sustainability and scalability of the resulting success of PAR Cycle Two. In turn, I have connected those complexities to multiple areas of theory and research that help explain the key claim that organizational complexities have great power to impede progress if they are not skillfully and thoughtfully managed. However, as I describe a new Theory IN Action (TIA), I posit that we can still use what we have learned to sustain participatory action research as an avenue for increasing understanding and skill in CLRP within our Middle School.

### **Theory IN Action**

My original Theory of Action (TOA) assumed that by enacting participatory action research (PAR) that involves teachers and teacher-leaders closest to the focus of practice we would be able to sustain teacher learning in CLRP that supported improved practice scalable to the remainder of the organization. Within the original TOA, however, there was far too much emphasis put on the knowledge of the teachers themselves as the catalyst for change and far too little emphasis put on the complexities of the organization as a barrier that mediated both the sustainability and scalability of that change. In fact, the organizational complexities were even found to influence the inquiry into both identifying learner needs (taking the time to know learners and crafting learner-centered instruction) and identifying teacher needs (lack of time to develop co-planning/teacher dynamics and the clarity of program goals to drive planning for learning). In addition, the original TOA, while giving voice to the establishment of a CPR team as an important catalyst for change through collaborative inquiry, failed to pay enough heed to the power of objective evidence to create

the cognitive dissonance that empowered collective change for the participating teachers. See Figure 12 for a grounded Theory IN Action (TIA) that accounts for the findings of this particular PAR and gives voice to both the power of collective inquiry as well as the power of organizational complexity.

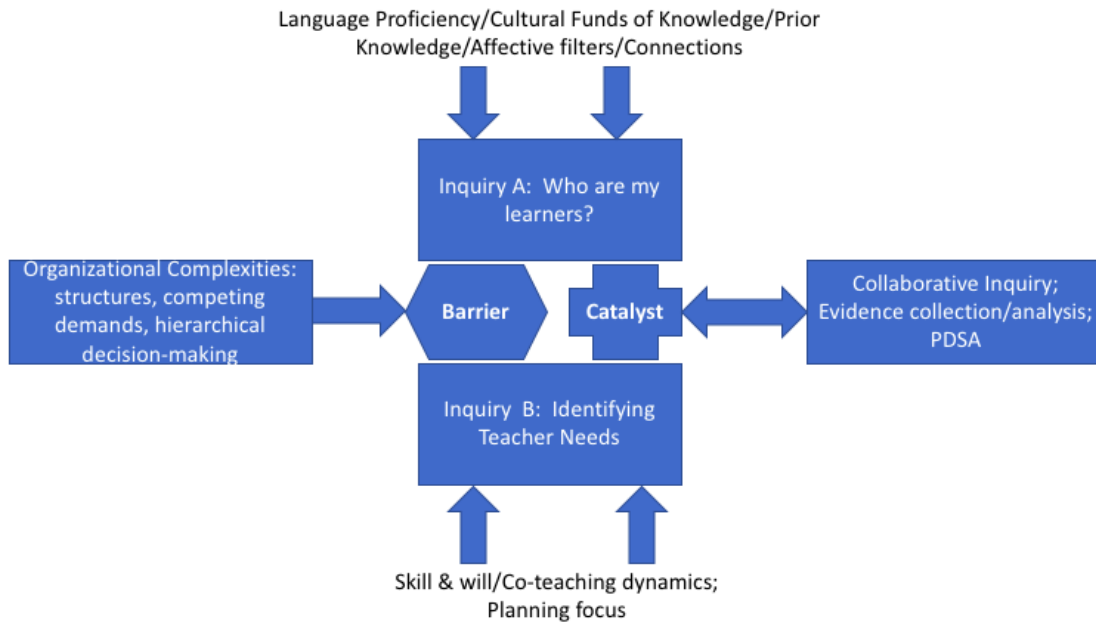
It is within this TIA that we hope to continue to sustain elements of learning from the PAR in our ongoing endeavor to embrace culturally and linguistically responsive practice while also collectively seeking to understand and purposefully shift the organizational complexities that interfere with teacher learning that, in turn, impacts student learning. In this section I have revisited my original Theory of Action (TOA) and revised it to a Theory IN Action to guide ongoing work. Following, I revisit the original research questions in light of the above (TIA).

### **Research Questions**

I review the research questions to offer another lens through which to view the PAR project and summarize the evidence that we collaboratively collected and analyzed.

### **Understanding and Use of CLRP**

The first research questions was: To what extent can the middle school SEAL teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practices? The short answer to this research question is ‘to a great extent’ given the clarity and space within which to focus their planning and acting for learning. The change that was evidenced in the short time between January and March of 2018 provides great hope for how iterative evidence in a PDSA cycle of inquiry using qualitative evidence that is co-analyzed can positively impact teacher decision-making and efficacy in acting on what they know in order to impact the learning of diverse students. However, as is pointed out in the discussion above regarding organizational complexity, the ability of any one actor in an organization to act in effective



*Figure 12.* Theory IN action.

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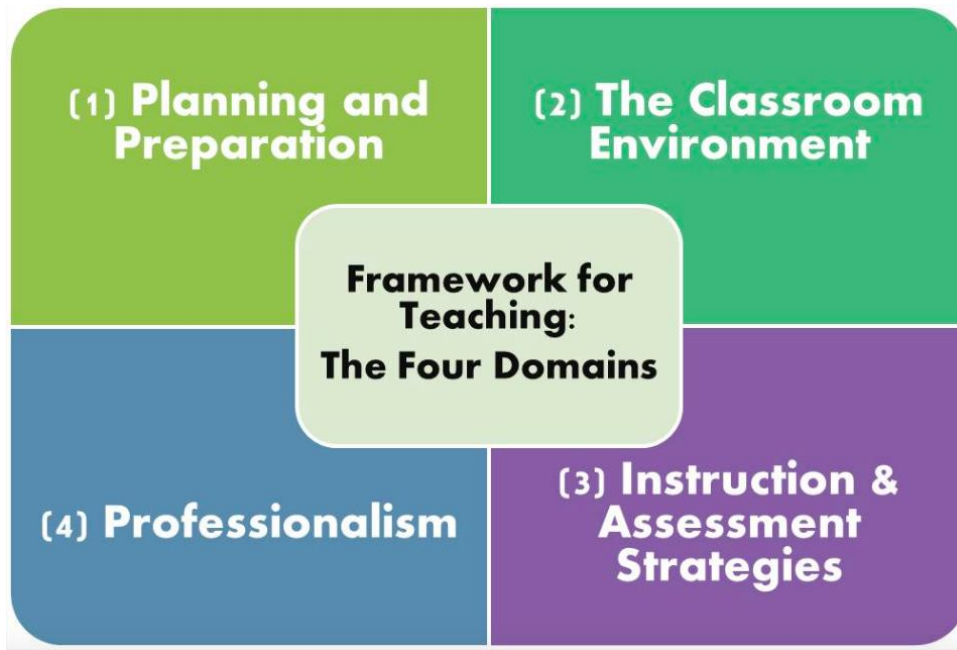
ways and be accountable for results, is too often impeded by lack of clarity, structural ineffectiveness and too many competing pressures.

### **CPR Team Understanding and Leadership**

Research question two was: To what extent have the CRP team members grown in their understandings and leadership of culturally and linguistically diverse populations and practices? Throughout the PAR project, the teachers and Director who were involved as members of the core team throughout the research cycles provided reflections and visible actions that indicated they grew in their understanding and implementation of CLRP to impact student learning. They added power to their ability to understand students and use what they know about students to plan for learning and then act for learning. The PAR project gives new depth to the Danielson framework for effective teaching and learning (see Figure 13).

Domain 1 focuses on demonstrating knowledge of students, which the teachers did through class maps and using that knowledge to make plans that set revised instructional outcomes along with designing more coherent instruction. As a result, they were better able to create an environment of respect and rapport that included the students' cultural background in establishing a culture of learning, and they re-organized the physical spaces for more equitable student to student interactions and learning, which is Domain 2 of Danielson's framework. This resulted in stronger student engagement as documented in the two observations from Spring 2018. As well, the co-teachers acquired a new sense of flexibility to work together in the classroom and respond to students (Domain 3). Finally, the teachers assumed more professional responsibility for outcomes by reflecting on their teaching and participating in a professional learning community in which they grew professionally (Domain 4) (Danielson, 2013).





*Figure 13.* Danielson's four domains.

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Despite the organizational complexities that impeded their ability to provide extended, explicit leadership, the teachers shared repertoire of practice that can be a resource for other teachers if the organizational structures shift so that they can meet, plan, and reflect.

### **Leadership Action Space**

Finally, research question three: How effectively do I use my leadership action space to support the learning work? During Spring 2018, when I stepped away from trying to organize a larger CPR and focused on teacher practice, I was consistently able to support the learning of the five teachers by documenting meetings, observing classrooms, and providing CLE protocols that supported teachers to make the shifts they made. As indicated in the claims in Chapter 6, I was able to support teachers to use and analyze iterative evidence in ways that aided them in shifting their planning and teaching practices. Once they observed the evidence, they made collaborative decisions to change. The evidence from the second cycle of observations of meetings and classrooms indicate those shifts. Without a leader bringing the tools to mediate their learning, it is unlikely the SEAL co-teachers could have made the shifts on their own. However, once they recognized the possibilities, they assumed leadership roles, and the PLC structure, which I began to view as more of a collegial conversation, took shape and supported reflection and action, the praxis necessary for authentic change (Freire, 2000). However, by Fall 2018 with competing project demands on my time due to new assignments and, time-wise, the limitation of the 30-minute meeting time on a Friday afternoon, all of us found it too complex to continue the work we had envisioned for Fall 2018. I look forward to and will continue to work with RB, the Director of EAL, to support her leadership in this area. In doing so, I see my role as primarily coaching her on continuing to use the CLE and other useful protocols in ongoing cycles of inquiry and analysis based on evidence in order to build on the value we discovered in the PDSA cycle during PAR Cycle Two.

In addition, the PAR experience impacted several areas of my work at Hayward including that of professional learning where I have spearheaded the use of Adaptive Schools as a school-wide approach for the use of protocols to engage student, teacher and community voice. I implemented learning cohorts that are rooted in our teaching and learning policy and its principles of high-quality learning which are being run internally by teams of teachers and administrators using the protocols of Adaptive Schools and focused on learning from and with one another. I continue to take the lessons learned on the power of evidence and inquiry cycles to drive our work – whether it is within a CLE with a group of cross-divisional, cross-cultural parents inquiring into international-mindedness/global citizenship, or a whole-school CLE at our new guiding statements launch party involving all 550+ faculty and staff on campus in mixed groups meaning-making (see Appendix S). The meaningful work of PDSA and the power of evidence-based decisions rooted in the wisdom of people and place as a way to access all voices has filtered into nearly all aspects of my learning leadership work (see Figure 14 for photographic images of this evidence in action).

### **Leadership Transformation**

[D]o not depend on the hope of results . . . [Y]ou may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. Thomas Merton

We now define constructivist leadership as *fostering capacity through the complex, dynamic processes of purposeful, reciprocal learning* (Lambert, Zimmerman, & Gardner, 2016, p. 10).

I concur. I concur because I have been engaged in the only type of leadership that builds and sustains a complex, dynamic community through time by supporting a culture of purposeful participation in which everyone on the team saw themselves as both a participant and as a leader. As I indicated in a doctoral assignment a year ago, the many years I have spent as a designated ‘leader’ in the area of curriculum and professional learning in



Learning cohort involving multi-disciplinary and multi-divisional colleagues learning with and from one another on digital citizenship and global collaboration through Adaptive Schools protocols.



Community Learning Exchange with parents on international-mindedness.



Launch Party following the CLE on Hayward's new guiding statements. As tweets from the learning exchange groups rolled across the screen, an artist rendered a sketch post live while balloons fell from the ceiling.

*Figure 14. CLE leadership in action.*

international schools, a position with little formal power, supported me in understanding leadership in this way. Dewey (1938) indicates that any experience should have these criteria: continuity and reciprocity. In sustaining supportive, equitable relationships through interactive dialogue and reciprocal learning, we were able to achieve collective change or movement that could be initiated and sustained with colleagues if the experience is set up to be interactive and reciprocal as well as coherent and continuing. I know this is best. I believe it communicates the level of trust and respect that all professional educators deserve, and I have long tried to operate in this model. Next, I describe my leadership transformation through the lens of the constructivist approach as well as the lens of continuously becoming. While this PAR project has been the impetus for significant evolution, I continue to be a work in progress.

### **Importance of the Constructivist Approach**

I have observed through research and in the context of Hayward International School how the ability to authorize the value of distributed leadership and reach into the constructivist II realm can be successful. However, that must permeate the organization as a whole rather than occur in small parts or silos of an organization. Gitlin et al. (2003) point out that diverse learners often encounter “welcoming and unwelcoming” structures and behaviors within the same organization. Within a complex and dynamic community, if individuals confront both traditional and constructivist leadership structures and approaches side-by-side with no apparent distinction between the context or situation that gives rise to the use of one model over the other, then the full bloom of participant partnership, which is critical for genuine reciprocity and continuity, struggles to be realized. I believe this happens because trust is compromised and then individuals choose to put their time and energy into fostering their own capacity to deal with their specific day-to-day concerns and work rather than

building the broad-based capacity for participation in collective leadership for the good of the whole.

I have come to understand that I must focus on my leadership beliefs and behaviors to more consistently model and participate in an educational community as a constructivist participant. That learning has been the most value-added benefit of the doctoral work and the PAR project. I have found that, although I have always believed in a highly participatory leadership model, my belief has not always driven my behaviors for a variety of reasons – sometimes urgency, sometimes the attributes of the context did not seem to support this approach, and sometimes because of my own impatience with the process. By insisting on a participatory action research program and charging me to maintain this stance over a sustained period of time, I have been supported to increase my understanding and skill as a practitioner and researcher. As a result, I have become more patient with the process and people and have been able to consistently use the strategies – CLE strategies as well as those from Adaptive Schools – that focus on inclusion activities to build community and sustain collective inquiry, organization and integration.

If there is one thing that has significantly changed for me over the course of the last eighteen months, it is the depth of understanding of the resilience and persistence that is necessary to stick with the behaviors and pedagogies to consistently communicate a constructivist way of working so that all structures are welcoming and supportive of this participant-ship and democratization. However, I have several wonderings. One, it has become clear with the CPR team and others connected with the PAR (other SEAL teachers for example), that not everyone is willing to take on the yoke of participant-ship and responsibility that democratization demands. While fully cognizant that this might be because of structures themselves (e.g. the remaining leadership structures that label some individuals administrators and some not, the administrative structures that trigger additional pay and,

therefore, additional responsibility, and the time structures that are controlled by administrators and not the teacher), or it may be because of the lack of skill or will on the part of individual participants, or, perhaps, a combination of the above. That said, I have seen when you can be consistent with constructivist approaches – much like when you follow a consistent training plan for a marathon – those approaches have the power to ensure that those with the will do rise to the occasion and become models for their colleagues. This has certainly been the case, in particular, with CM who, although new to the school last year, has, through this process, become a beacon of light and promise for everyone she works with – both adults and students alike. And that, for me, is the power and promise of constructivist leadership.

For me, the metaphor of the marathon is this lesson; I need to always be in training, rather than sprinting, in order to sustain the energy and resilience that is necessary to support, if need be, one beacon at a time that can begin to double, then triple, then quadruple the impact. And each small victory is a cause for celebration.

### **Process of Becoming: Continuous Process**

From the time I first stepped inside a classroom, I have understood that, as a professional educational practitioner, I would always be in a process of becoming. Even 28 years ago, education was a complex enterprise, and it has gotten increasingly so as the years have unfolded. I have also, over the years, been in a number of diverse educational settings both in the US and abroad, which has undergirded my keen understanding that context matters. As Bryk et al. (2015) point out, there is always an inherent importance to asking, "What works, for whom, and under what set of conditions" (p. 13). However, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, I identified deeply with Labaree's (2003) statement that "research claims in education tend to be mushy, highly contingent, and heavily qualified, and the focus is frequently more on description and interpretation than on causation" (p. 14). I have felt the

tension this causes in various educational landscapes because it can be an excuse for inaction and, I have often felt over the years, that as the complexity and diversity increases, there can be incredible difficulty in pulling people together in a systematic and focused way to deeply develop the trusting relationships and interactive dialogue that supports enduring improvement. That has proven to be true in the case of this project and in my unfolding understanding of both this context and my leadership action space within it.

As I pointed out in my first exploration of my research identity, initially I felt fortunate that in my current position I was deeply entrenched in professional responsibilities that call for a firmer foothold in the analytical, theoretical and intellectual – areas that are in need of strengthening for those of us that want to truly embrace being a research-practitioner (Labaree, 2003). Yet, as I began this research-practitioner journey, I also felt keenly the constraints of my position as I began working with a new administrator in charge of the division in which I was focusing. And the tension I felt then about how to accomplish deep, over-time, sustained change, remains, albeit with a more dynamic understanding gained from the experience of this participatory action research project. As contexts shifts dramatically – such as they have here over the course of the eighteen months of the project – it has become as Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) point out, ‘steady work’, not because the project was enacted without understanding the contextual problem, but because the contextual problem has shifted dramatically and continues to do so due to decisions made outside my leadership action space (Labaree, 2003).

Nevertheless, even with the ever-shifting sands of Hayward, I have come to some elements of leadership transformation through this project that I am grateful for. I believe the element of focus and re-focus with those closest to the focus of practice (the teachers) and the increasing structures I put into place as the PAR unfolded have taught me a great deal about



leading within complex environments. I believe my transformation is best understood through a look at “From – To” as in Table 12.

As is seen in Table 12, Participatory Action Research (PAR) Cycle Two was the impetus for the majority of the transformative leadership during the course of the project. PAR Cycle One seemed shapeless and, thus, contributed a great deal to my permission paralysis. I was trying to work predominately with a new divisional administrator who was under a great deal of pressure to establish a new division and saw this project as a bit of a side distraction. My uncertain panic seemed to be a necessary force that enabled me, through the evidence collected during that cycle, to shift my leadership focus to those closest to the FOP. That shift served not only to enlarge my leadership action space, but also to move forward with principled action rooted in strategic thinking together with the teachers. I believe this lesson is best viewed through what Bryk (2015) terms the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle. As Donald Berwick is quoted in Bryk (2015), “The problem is that managing quality is not just an intellectual endeavor; it is a pragmatic one. The point is not just to know what can make things better or worse; it is to develop the know-how necessary to actually make things better” (Bryk, 2015, p. 21). And that ‘know-how’ will always be rooted in the context – the place in which and the people in whom the change sits.

I needed PAR Cycle One to understand what was and was not going to happen with the divisional administrator involved. I needed to personally take the stance in PAR Cycle Two to shift my attention and leadership actions to the teachers – which not only supported them but enabled me to use my position to give them the permission they needed. The permission to have the time and space to consider objective evidence helped them understand the FOP better and decide on the most value-added steps forward. In other words, as Stringer (2014) indicates, it was during PAR Cycle Two (Spring 2018) that I was able to support people in analyzing their situations through actions such as the “Mapping the Class” activity

Table 12

*Leadership Transformation*

From	Transformation Impetus	To
Uncertain panic	PAR 2: While the level of uncertainty didn't change, learning to be comfortable in the thrash while building trusting relationships with the teachers enabled this change	Uncertain flexibility
Permission paralysis	PAR 2: Working with the CPR team closest to the focus of practice; understanding I could give the permission necessary to shift practice	Principled action rooted in strategic thinking
Small leadership action space	PAR 2: Working with the CPR team closest to the focus of practice	Enlarged leadership action space
Intuition, choice-based actions	PAR 2: Thoughtful change that came with teachers analyzing their own evidence, prompting change for increasing equity for students	Evidence-based actions
Lack of understanding the depth of context-based influences.	Fall, 2018	Deep understanding of contextual influences and their impact on scalable, sustainable change

and transcripts of planning meetings and classes, consider the implications of the findings and forge the most learner-centered, culturally and linguistically responsive path forward.

Through that cycle, I fully recognized the power of evidence-based decision making through being a guide on the side by offering objective evidence for their consideration and change. I appreciate a great deal, more than previously, the power of stimulating people to change based on non-judgmental qualitative evidence. However, as the ever-changing landscape of this particular research context has shown, my ability to take that lesson and use it to transform how we work was mired in a great number of variables. In this particular case, the evolution of schedules which tripled the number of teachers involved in the SEAL program – many of whom were relatively new to teaching; the same schedule changes which made the three participating SEAL teachers' jobs increasingly complex and the lack of space and time for them to consider how to take their new-found understanding and skill and use it to influence their colleagues has all played a role in how, as Chinua Achebe's eponymous novel's title forwards: "Things Fall Apart". And it has made me think deeply about how I, as a leader, can move forward in utilizing my new-found knowledge and skill as a catalyst in working with colleagues to forge sustainable and scalable change within the ever-evolving and complex landscape of international education. As always in education, I am a work in progress at the same time the work is in progress.

### **Implications for Practice, Research, and Policy**

A useful research effort "gives priority to coherent systems of instruction and asks how resources are used within them" (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2002, p. 138). Ultimately the inherent value in any resource is dependent on the way it is used. In this section, I first discuss the implications for use in practice, including the important practice of teacher inquiry. Then I discuss how researchers could develop projects in which they are participant

observers and could be a mediator for teacher teams. Finally, I describe how we could change school and district or organizational policy to support teacher inquiry.

### **Practice Implications**

The implications for teacher practice, particularly forming teacher inquiry groups or networked improvement communities, are multiple. The implications of the PAR process for micro and meso level work, including using the CLE protocols and the improvement science inquiry process, is documented in the claims of the project, and this process is replicable. Using the processes, we used in the PDSA cycle of inquiry to document, analyze, and discuss how to shift the practices of co-teaching in SEAL classrooms is widely applicable in other school settings. Given that a team of teachers makes a choice to work with a coach or supervisor who has the responsibility for non-judgmental observation and documentation of classrooms and the team has a structured and dependable meeting time, a team can use this research to design a process, reflect on results, and make commitments to change. We know from the evidence supporting the claims that qualitative evidence from two-three sources helped teachers to actually see their practices and use that sighting as an impetus for change. These methods can be used to support a similar PLC group with a wide variety of instructional areas of focus.

A second implication pertains to support from the institution or meso level of the work. If administrators or other persons who have control over schedules and teacher time do not have the knowledge of the actual learning of the teachers and the shifts they were able to make, it is unlikely that institutional support structures can change. Thus, the challenge provides a limitation and an implication. The teachers and I, as the PAR facilitator, did not fully consider how to make our learning public in ways that might have been persuasive to administrators. We were actually too busy doing the actual work of changing our planning and teaching practices and documenting and analyzing them. Knowing what we know now,

we should have been more conscious of how to engage the administrators and persons directly responsible for SEAL program. While we constructed policy documents and guidelines for implementation, those were insufficient in ensuring that the process received time in the school schedule.

Secondly, this is a small team. Future teacher inquiry or research by a participant observer might include larger numbers of teams and engage the administrators so that we could assess the effectiveness in a larger setting with more teams of teachers and the requisite decision-making power to evolve the organizational structures and systems to support deeper and wider change efforts.

K-12 education reform requires iterative evidence for making decisions, and the formative evidence in this project is a strong example of how to use evidence in cycles of inquiry. Yet, analyzing evidence in the systematic ways that I analyzed and shared with teachers is a complex and time-consuming task that may not be possible for many teacher teams. Using the process would require a kind of professional learning that is not common in most schools and someone has to be authorized to collect and analyze the evidence so other team members can collectively use the evidence in meetings. Because the PAR project and study included a small number of teachers and one administrator who could devote time to observations and analysis, it was possible in this setting. A limitation for teams is typically not collecting evidence but having the time and expertise to analyze the evidence for the purpose of changing practices. Further, much of the work of PLCs is focused on collecting and analyzing evidence from students as opposed to collecting and analyzing evidence of teacher planning and acting for learning.

### **Research Implications**

A number of potentially rich areas of research could stem from the PAR. Continuing to establish the relationship between quality planning and acting for learning may give rise to

evolving supervision and coaching models and structures that may have increasing impact on teachers' skill in making responsive decisions both while planning and while acting for learning. Additional research on the use of evidence collection and analysis to drive instructional change could begin to explore the development of tools and processes that can be simplified in order to be more feasible in supporting ongoing teacher reflection and action – both collectively and individually. Further, research into the organizational elements of international schools that support increasing nimbleness to respond to changing demographics of either student or teacher population or of the context in which the organization sits would be beneficial as the international school market continues to grow and strive to equitably meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

These potential rich areas for research; however, also speak to the limitations – the most major of which is the generalizability of findings within PAR. Because the contexts of international schools are unique and because PAR is driven by the place and people, both the replicability and the generalizability of any research will be somewhat limited. Nevertheless, continuing to explore relationships between and among elements of PAR that can be a catalyst for change as well as how organizations mediate the organizational complexities that can be a barrier for change, that research will add to the growing discussion and theory surrounding change for quality and equity for our growing diversity of learners.

### **Policy Implications**

A number of areas for policy implications resonate for international schools. Foremost, particularly as an IB World School, we need to fully consider the growing implications for required language policies and inclusion policies. Further areas for policy development may be in the areas of curriculum and professional learning. Within curriculum this applies to the balance that is sought between guaranteed curriculum while at the same time being responsive to a growing culturally and linguistically diverse student population

which calls for increasing personalization. Perhaps most rooted in the findings of this particular PAR; however, is the need to rethink professional learning policies and practice and ensuring the resulting organizational structures are in place to support a richer, evidence-based approach to inquiry learning to shift teacher practice. Furthermore, there is the implication that international schools must consider the fact that when policy changes are made (such as with admissions policies) they need to be made in conjunction with changes in other policies and timelines that can support the implications. That is, admission policy changes that welcome a wider range of diverse learners must be met with equal attention to the teaching and learning and professional learning policies that can support efficacy in acting for equitable learning.

A limitation of the policy implications is, again, the wide variety of international schools which may limit the ability of the broader policy organizations – such as the International Baccalaureate – to create overarching position statements that will effectively guide individual schools to create strong evidence-based policies and practices that fit their particular people and place to ensure equitable, high-quality learning for all teachers and students.

### **Conclusion**

We began this program and PAR journey by reading Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; in the second summer of the program, we used these works to reflect on change theory and discussed Lear's (2006) *Radical Hope* connected with Freire's (1994) later work *The Pedagogy of Hope*. The power of this PAR project is, indeed, the evidence it provides that participatory action research is a hopeful avenue for community-based, equity-focused change within international schools. That international schools are facing a new future in a time of historical change is well documented (Carder, 2012; Pierce, 2013; Weschler, 2017); how nimble they can become in the face of that change in order to respond to and embrace

diversity as an asset on which to model equity in access to high quality learning, is less clear. While one could define nimbleness in an international school as the willingness to open our doors wider to welcome increasingly diverse learners, that is not enough. True nimbleness requires embracing the journey of change that increasing diversity demands. PAR processes hold the promise of supporting us in this journey of evidence-based hope. As Freire (1994) indicates, “[T]he future of which we dream is not inexorable. We have to make it, produce it, else it will not come in the form that we would more or less wish it to. True, of course, we have to make it not arbitrarily, but with the materials, with concrete reality, of which we dispose and more as a project than a dream” (Freire, 1994, p. 101). That future – one in which international schools embrace culturally and linguistically responsive practice in the name of equitable, high-quality learning for diverse learners – requires us to become fully conscious about our roles and responsibilities and be intentional with our agency so that we may, in turn, create the resilient, sociocultural ecologies in our education system for adult and student learning that Gutiérrez (2016) imagines and Freire (1992), Lear (2008) and I hope for.

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then do better.” - Maya Angelou



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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



### EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

#### University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board

4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building- Mail Stop 682

600 Moyer Boulevard, Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914, Fax 252-744-2284

[www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

### Notification of Continuing Review Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Christie Powell](#)  
CC: [Matthew Militello](#)  
Date: 7/5/2018  
Re: [CR00007035](#)  
[UMCIRB 17001482](#)  
Nimble or not?

The continuing review of your expedited study was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/3/2018 to 7/2/2019. This research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

#### Document Description

[Powell\\_Dissertation\\_Proposal\\_June2017.pdf\(0.01\)](#) Study Protocol or Grant Application

[Powell\\_Dissertation\\_Protocols.pdf\(0.01\)](#) Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions

[Powell\\_Informed Consent.pdf\(0.03\)](#) Consent Forms

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418

IRB000003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG000004 18

## **APPENDIX B: GUIDING STATEMENT FOR LITERACY LEARNING**

Hayward International School  
Guiding Statements: Literacy: English Language Arts

### **WHY English Language Arts:**

At Hayward, we believe that language and culture mediates all learning. Therefore, in English Language Arts, a robust approach to learning about and through language in all its written, verbal and non-verbal forms is the foundation for inquiry, learning, communicating understanding, and connecting with diverse texts and people.

Literacy is a critical transdisciplinary skill that enables us to acquire specific knowledge and conceptual understanding as well as to reflect and collaborate for impact in our complex world. It is also the skill that enables us to explore and develop our own perspectives and voices all the while seeking to understand and critically evaluate other perspectives.

### **WHAT are our long-term transfer goals (our life-long learning stances/aspirations for students):**

- Students identify themselves as enthusiastic and skillful communicators that can craft effective written and spoken messages for a variety of personal, educational and professional purposes and audiences.
- Students identify themselves as engaged readers that read and view with a sense of enjoyment and for a variety of purposes including personal pleasure and growth, increasing knowledge and understanding, and the consideration and critical evaluation of ideas from a variety of perspectives.
- Students intelligently, articulately and sensitively communicate and participate in a variety of personal and professional contexts with clarity and genuine curiosity.
- Students appreciate and understand the power of language.

### **HOW will we engage students in learning:**

- We will allocate specific attention to developing speaking and listening skills through varied and explicit experiences in order to develop students' inquiry and collaboration skills and personal voices.
- We will purposefully interweave the various modes of language in our learning (spoken, written, visual) to connect, problem solve, collaborate, and create.
- We will pay attention to exploring a range of inter-connected literacies including informational literacy, digital literacy, intercultural literacy, and social-emotional literacy.
- We will use a balanced approach to whole class, flexible group and individual (student choice) learning that is culturally and linguistically responsive including differentiation for interest and readiness and scaffolding for language.
- We will invoke a sense of student ownership and pride that enables students to draw on their mother-tongue and culture to enrich their learning.
- We will intentionally engage with digital literacy in order to collaborate, connect and communicate authentically within and beyond our community, including publishing to the world.
- We will ensure global perspectives and voices are represented and respected as students are asked to read, write, speak and think deeply about a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- We will learn about language in context.



## APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE POLICY

### Language Policy

**Purpose:** To provide a framework that reflects the IB values and aims with regard to multilingualism and equitable access to high quality learning that ensures these values are reflected in our programmes and practices.

Policy Code & Number	
Originators:	Director of Curriculum & IB Coordinators
Approved:	Initial approval 2014 (published in the Hayward Faculty Handbook, p. 18-25)  Revised approval: August 17, 2017
Revised:	Spring, 2017, drafted by Originators, reviewed and amended June, 2017 by faculty and leaders in languages; brought to A&E Board for approval on August 17, 2017.  This policy to be up for annual review in May of each school year.
Related Policies, Procedures, Documents	Assessment Policy

### Philosophy of language learning

*“When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather they are learning the foundation of learning itself.”* (Halliday, 1993)

At Hayward, we believe language mediates all learning as students learn about language and through language across all discipline areas. As such, all our students are language learners and all teachers are teachers of language and disciplinary literacy.

Due to the inextricable links between language, culture and identity, our cultural and linguistic diversity as an international school presents unique opportunities for a rich learning environment that adds value to each global learner, educator and member of our community.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Hayward is committed to culturally and linguistically responsive practices as an approach to developing internationally minded, multilingual global citizens.

## Shared beliefs

- All students are capable of working at a high intellectual level.
- Utilizing the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles (linguistic and cultural) of diverse students make learning experiences more relevant and effective (Gay, 2013).
- First and additional language *acquisition* is an intuitive process whereby we acquire the language through using it for communicative purposes; this should be the initial focus for language instruction rather than language *learning* (awareness and ability to explain grammatical rules) (Krashen, 1983).
- Students develop language and literacy through engagement with texts (oral and written) and language practices embedded in disciplines rather than as a prerequisite to engagement (Bunch, 2013).
- Students need to engage in increasingly extended and structured oral and written interaction as they develop their language skills (Galguera, 2011).
- Language learning for academic purposes requires scaffolding language demands for diverse learners (Galguera, 2011).
- Translanguaging, or the ability to draw on students' native language and cultures, is an important pedagogical approach with diverse learners. (Rojas, 2015).
- Responsive instruction in language learning includes activating prior knowledge and choosing contexts and texts purposefully to respond to student diversity (Walqui & Heritage, 2012)
- Additive bilingualism, or promoting pride and continued development in mother-tongue and culture while learning a second language, supports student academic achievement (Rolstad, Mahoney & Glass, 2005).
- Affective filters such as anxiety, motivation and self-confidence impact language acquisition (Krashen, 1983).

## CONTEXT

Hayward lies in the heart of Singapore; a culturally rich and linguistically diverse environment. Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Western cultural influences abound and are reflected, in part, in the many languages spoken including English, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil. English is the official language of Singapore which mirrors the language of instruction at Hayward International School.

Globalism lies at the heart of Hayward and our ethos is built around offering a truly international education. The national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the student body and staff at Hayward are quite diverse. We have over 65 countries and 40 languages represented in our student body, as well as teachers and staff from a multitude of national and cultural backgrounds with a wide array of language proficiencies.

It is within this context that we seek to embrace culturally and linguistically responsive practices through the language pathways we offer and throughout the teaching and learning experiences that the students encounter across the curriculum. Our specialized language pathways include a World Languages program with daily Mandarin or Spanish, a mother-tongue program, and a scaffolded approach to English language acquisition. These specialized pathways are grounded by our overall approach to literacy that includes disciplinary language and literacy across the school.

## **PRACTICES**

As a result we are committed to the following practices as reflective practitioners and respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive educators:

**Knowing our learners.** Every educator is charged with knowing and understanding the learners in their care including their language proficiency and academic background, cultural and family background, preferred approaches to learning, and interests. This is the foundation which anchors all other principles and practices and undergirds our belief that all students are language learners as well as that, as educators, we learn about, from, and with our learners.

- **Creating caring communities** of learners within our classrooms and school where cultural and linguistic diversity is known, understood and valued as an asset for everyone's learning.
- **Using the cultural knowledge and background** of students to enrich and create connections for learning including building background knowledge and selection of contexts and texts for learning. Students have the opportunities to share and learn more about their cultural background as well as that of others.
- **Utilizing the appropriate grade-level and proficiency literacy learning outcomes** (AERO English Language Arts, WIDA Can-do Descriptors, ACTFL World Language Standards) to support and extend every student's literacy learning and create explicit language objectives for learning that are tied to disciplinary/content objectives.
- **Ensuring all students access academically challenging tasks** through providing appropriate disciplinary language and thinking scaffolds (e.g., explicit practice and use of tiered vocabulary, sentence stems, tiered questions, graphic organizers, structured oral interaction, etc.)
- **Collaborating with EAL specialists** to continually increase our understanding of disciplinary literacy and language as well as strategies to support high quality language learning for all students.
- **Committing to the principles of the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP)** including, but not limited to:
  - Clearly defining and displaying language and content objectives for learning
  - Scaffolding content and language as needed (e.g., text, assignments) to all levels of student proficiency.
  - Meaningful learning engagements that integrate content concepts and knowledge with language practice opportunities (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing)
  - Building background knowledge (connections to prior learning and to personal/cultural background and experiences; focus on key vocabulary)
  - Ensuring comprehensible input (clarity of explanations; variety in instructional techniques -- modeling, hands on, demonstrations, visuals, video, etc.; providing scaffolds as discussed above).
  - Creating opportunities for frequent, structured interaction and discussion that require increasingly elaborated responses and utilize intentional and flexible groupings of students.
  - Providing a variety of practice and application engagements within the classroom to ensure active engagement of the students approximately 90% of each learning period.
  - Focusing on rich and regular feedback to students through frequent formative assessment.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Hayward seeks to support all teachers as teachers of language through a variety of approaches including offering SIOP courses at Level I and II, ongoing disciplinary work with language experts and our own internal EAL experts, and attendance at targeted external workshops.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, training in language acquisition strategies is ***required*** of all Hayward teachers and administrators. Current faculty have until December of 2018 to fulfill this requirement through SIOP training or an acceptable alternative training course taken either while at Hayward or previously.

## APPENDIX D: CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE

Critical Attributes of CLRP	Observable, concrete actions, attitudes, evidence of the attribute
Creates a caring community of learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Kunc, 1992; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple strategies are used to know and understand the community of learners.</li> <li>• Students are active agents in their learning; showing accountability for self and for supporting others.</li> <li>• Interaction that demonstrates an inclusive sense of belonging; students’ interactions with one another and student/teacher interactions are fluid, flexible, respectful and caring.</li> <li>• Use of quality mediation tools – questioning, students as experts, structured interaction, multiple language modalities (writing, speaking, listening, drawing) engages all learners.</li> <li>• Routines and management for classroom behavior positively promote respect and self-management and are clearly in place.</li> </ul>
Translanguaging or use of students’ native languages and cultures to enrich learning in the classroom (Celic & Seltzer, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of when, how and why students will use their native language and culture (orally or with texts) to support their learning is present.</li> <li>• Students are actively encouraged to connect classroom content and engagements to own lives, languages, background and culture.</li> </ul>
Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of texts, visuals and teaching strategies (including modeling, use of and deconstruction of exemplars and grouping) are used to ensure understanding of content and concepts.</li> </ul>
Discipline-based pedagogical language knowledge is embedded in intellectual work (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Bunch, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both content and language objectives are posted</li> <li>• Learning engagements intertwine these objectives throughout the lesson.</li> </ul>
Scaffolding supports for language are present (Rojas, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various strategies (e.g., sentence stems, graphic organizers, texts in mother tongue, translanguaging) are evident.</li> </ul>
Extended, structured oral and written interaction and discourse is present (Verplaetse, 2000; Zwiers, 2006, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible, intentional groupings are used for learning engagements.</li> <li>• Academic language appropriate to the task is scaffolded and utilized by students in their interactions.</li> <li>• There are intentional questions and prompts: “Tell me more.” “Why do you say that?” which encourage all students to elaborate and explain.</li> </ul>

<p>Building background knowledge and using student background knowledge to be responsive in choosing contexts and texts used for learning (Walqui &amp; Heritage, 2012).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for building background knowledge are inclusive and various cultural and personal perspectives are explored.</li> <li>• Both teachers and students can explain how and why particular contexts and texts were chosen for learning.</li> <li>• Texts and contexts for learning reflect the cultural diversity of the classroom.</li> </ul>
<p>Engaging all students in respectful intellectual tasks with high expectations for achievement. (Ladson-Billings, 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation and scaffolding support student voice and choice in demonstrating their understanding of and skill in grade-level outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p>Embracing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry stances focused on “From whose perspective?”, “Who does this serve?”, “How is this equitable for diverse groups?” are present and allow for exploration and critique of social justice issues.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

**Nimble or not? An action research study focused on culturally and linguistically responsive practice at an American International School.**

### Focus Group Protocol

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this focus group interview/activity and will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Christie Powell. I will serve as the moderator for the interview/activity and will be assisted by my co-research practitioners one of whom will be taking notes. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. This interview/activity is part of a study to assess how we can build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The purpose of the research project is to explore how teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practice as well as to understand what leadership and learning structures support teachers in this endeavor. Lessons learned from this project will inform us how to create an action plan that can sustain CLRP learning and practice for all our teachers.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- This protocol will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview/activity will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about both the individual knowledge and skills gained and the organization practices used. It is our hope that everyone will contribute to the conversation.
- The interview will last approximately one hour.

#### Interview Questions

**TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:**

**“This is (*Your Name*), *facilitating* (*Name*) on (*Date*) for the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practice Study.**

Focus Group:

To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself and describe your role in the school. Start with first person to the right and continue left till all participants have introduced themselves.

QUESTIONS / PROTOCOL (TBD by CRP team – all questions would not be used in one session.)

### **Background**

1. What led you to become a teacher?
2. What are your beliefs about learning?
3. What do you see as your most important role(s) as a teacher?
4. Did your teacher preparation program and/or your previous teaching roles include learning about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students? How so?

### **Hayward Community and Teaching Practice:**

1. How would you describe Hayward as a school and school community?
2. How would you describe the students you teach?
3. How would you describe your ongoing evolution of being a reflective practitioner?
  - a. Has the diversity of the student body at Hayward changed your philosophy or teaching practice in any way? How so?
  - b. What have you learned about teaching diverse students in an international school through your experience here?
  - c. What formal or more informal learning experiences have you had that have supporting your professional learning with regard to being a culturally and linguistically responsive practitioner?

### **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practice:**

4. How would you describe your understanding of CLRP?
  - a. What has influenced this understanding? (teacher preparation courses, workshops, PLC participation, self-directed learning and experiences?)
  - b. In what ways do you view CLRP as a paradigm or set of beliefs about students and learning?
5. In what ways have you been able to use your understanding to influence your practice and your community of practice (e.g., department, division)?
  - a. What has supported your use of these practices? What, if anything, has hindered your use of these practices?
6. What do you see as the benefits of CLRP for student engagement and achievement?
  - a. Do you now or have you ever collected evidence to support this approach to teaching and learning? If not, how might you do so?
7. What questions or wonderings do you still have about CLRP?
8. What do you see as important next steps for Hayward to support increasing CLRP in the classroom and school?



## APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

### **Nimble or not? An action research study focused on culturally and linguistically responsive practice at an American International School.**

#### **Observation Protocol**

##### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this observation cycle.

My name is Christie Powell. I will serve as the facilitator of our discussion today. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. This observation protocol is part of a study to assess how we can build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The purpose of the research project is to explore how teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practices well as to understand what leadership and learning structures support teachers in this endeavor. Lessons learned from this project will inform us how to create an action plan that can sustain CLRP learning and practice for all our teachers.

##### **Disclosures:**

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- This protocol will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The protocol will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format for goal setting and the follow-up interview/coaching session. The observation will take place in a regularly scheduled 80-minute block.

##### **General Observation Protocol Outline**

For each round of observations in this study, we will utilize the following protocol:

- 1) A minimum of two days prior to the lesson observation we will co-construct your focus goals for the observation. At that time, we will decide, based on your goals, the appropriate observation method to be used [e.g., selective verbatim, checklist, seating chart (verbal flow, at task, movement patterns, etc.)]. The goal session will take approximately 30 minutes.
- 2) I will conduct the observation of a full 80-minute block and record appropriate data.
- 3) A maximum of 3 days after the observation we will follow-up with a semi-structured interview/coaching session including sharing the data from the observation. The interview/coaching session will last approximately 1 hour.

**Goal-Setting Protocol:**

**TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:**

**“This is (*Your Name*), talking with (*Name*) on (*Date*) for the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practice Study.**

- 1) What aspects of CLRP are the focus of your goals?
  - Which, in particular, are of particular concern to you at this time?
- 2) What are you hoping to see in the lesson? How have you specifically planned in order to illicit these observable behaviors?
- 3) When you think of your upcoming lesson and your focus, what form of feedback would be most useful to you?
- 4) What other questions or concerns do you have?

**APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION AND DATA COLLECTION SHEET**

**Date:**

**Class:**

**Teacher:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

**Description of class make-up:**

**Focus of observation:**

Data (Objective descriptions)	Name/Questions

## APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Nimble or not? An action research study focused on culturally and linguistically responsive practice at an American International School.**

### Semi-structured Interview Protocol

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview and will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Christie Powell. I will serve as the interviewer today. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. This interview is part of a study to assess how we can build the capacity of international school teachers to improve the affective and cognitive learning of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The purpose of the research project is to explore how teachers understand and utilize culturally and linguistically diverse practices well as to understand what leadership and learning structures support teachers in this endeavor. Lessons learned from this project will inform us how to create an action plan that can sustain CLRP learning and practice for all our teachers.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- This protocol will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format.
- The interview will last approximately one hour.

#### Interview Questions

**TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:**

**“This is *(Your Name)*, interviewing *(School Name)* on *(Date)* for the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practice Study.**

To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself and describe your role in the school.

Questions:

- 1) What culturally and linguistically responsive practices did you plan for in the lesson that was observed?
  - a. What is your reflection on how those practices were received by the students? Can you point to specific students, responses, reactions that led you to these reflections/conclusions?

- 2) What supported your planning and implementation of these CLRPs?
- 3) What hindered your planning and implementation of these CLRPs?
- 4) What is your reflection on how these practices supported or didn't support student learning?
  - a. Can you point to specific students, responses, reactions that led you to these reflections/conclusions?
- 5) What questions or wonderings do you have about my observation data from your lesson?
- 6) What wonderings do you have about CLRP as a result of this lesson?
  - a. What are you thinking about with regard to next steps as in your CLRP as a teacher?

## APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

East  
University

Carolina

### Informed Consent to Participate in Research Information to Consider Before Taking Part in Research That Has No More Than Minimal Risk



**Title of Research Study:** Nimble or not?: An action research study focused on culturally and linguistically responsive practice at an American International School.

Principal Investigator: Christie Powell under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello  
Dr. Militello: Institution, Department or Division: College of Education  
Address: 220 Ragsdale, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858  
Telephone #: (919) 518.4008

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#### **Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**

The changing demographics of American International Schools demand a response to increasing cultural and linguistic diversity to provide equitable teaching and learning to their increasingly diverse student populations. This study seeks to examine the current understanding and skill in culturally and linguistically responsive practice of teachers in a select international school and to engage co-research practitioners in developing and engaging the teachers in research-based professional learning experiences to increase their knowledge and skill in responding to this population of students.

*You are being invited to participate because you are either (a) a pedagogical leader in the middle school of the participating school, (b) a teacher in the EAL or Language and Literature departments at the participating school, or (c) a teacher in another department at the middle school level at the participating school.*

#### **Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

#### **What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**

You can choose not to participate.

#### **Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research will be conducted at your school. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is between 4-8 hours each semester of participation.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to participate in one or more focus group interviews/activities (PLCs), observations and follow-up interviews. Interviews and focus groups will be audio or video recorded. If you want to participate in an interview but do not want to be audio recorded, the interviewer will turn off the audio recorder. If you want to participate in a focus group but do not want to be video recorded, you will be able to sit out of field of view of the video camera and still be audio recorded. Interview and focus group activities and questions will focus on culturally and linguistically responsive practice for

diverse learners. Classroom observations and follow-up interviews will be focused on CLRP practices.

**What might I experience if I take part in the research?**

We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We do not know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

**Will it cost me to take part in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?**

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?**

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Consent forms and data from focus group interviews/activities, observations and follow-up interviews will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be stored for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

**What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?**

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at +6587924084.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2941 (days, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC at +1252-744-1971.

**I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

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<b>Participant's Name (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Person Obtaining Informed Consent:** I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

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<b>Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**APPENDIX J: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY PAR CYCLE ONE**

Individual Activities	CPR Team	Middle School Teachers
Prepared synthesis of research CLRP	Individual meetings RE: research focus and CPR team	Preparing and delivering an introductory, invitational overview to CLRP as a strategic intent of the school.
Ongoing memos	CPR Team meeting #1	Meeting with Lang and Lit teachers - invitation to participate
Infusing CLE elements into Leadership Modules, Strategic Planning Processes, PLC inquiry	CPR Team meeting #2 Obtained consent for participation	Meeting with Sheltered EAL (SEAL) and Mainstream EAL (MEAL) teachers - invitation to participate
Individual meetings with Director of EAL and Middle School Principal as needed	CPR Team meeting #3	Meeting with Middle School HODs re: CLRP observation protocol
Review of data including coding and identifying emerging themes.	CPR Team meeting #4 to share emerging findings	Structured audio-taped discussion with three participating SEAL teachers. Obtained consent for participation.
		Community Learning Exchange conducted with all members of middle school EAL faculty (November 10)
		Individual meetings with Sheltered EAL disciplinary co-teachers; invitation to participate. Obtained consent from two partner teachers to participate.
		Initial classroom observation of co-teaching for five participating teachers.

## APPENDIX K: KEY LEADERSHIP ACTIONS AND DATA PAR CYCLE TWO

WEEK OF:	INPUT	EVIDENCE	OUTCOME
January 15	Planning for cycle	Memo  Notes on meeting	Clarity on the most value-added plan
January 22	“Mapping the Class” Activity  Choose focal partnerships  On-line reflection	Class maps  Reflective memos from all participating teachers  Memo	Realizations of levels of knowledge about students  Clarity on resources for planning needs
Feb. 5-16	Planning Meeting Observations (n=3)  Classroom Observations (n=3)	Verbatim transcripts planning meetings and observations  Memos	Evidence of what was and was not guiding the planning and acting for learning
Feb. 19-23	Reflection meetings with CPR members (n=5)	Self-coding and reflection  Priorities for CLE  Memo	Increasing understanding of areas for focus in planning for CLRP  Priorities for CLE established and agenda set
March 2	Community Learning Exchange	Learning plans for upcoming ‘learning sprint’  Reflections on CLE and commitments  Memo	Focus on CLRP for planning requires making curriculum changes  CLRP is student focused  Effective use of time
March 12 - 16	Online reflective memo by CPR group (n=5)	Reflective memos  Memo	Increasing understanding of modeling principles of CLRP
March 26-29	Planning meeting observations (n=3)  Classroom observations (n=3)	Verbatim transcripts planning meetings and classroom observations.  Memo	Increasing evidence of thoughtful planning/ acting for learning with CLRP
April 9 – April 20	Semi-structured interviews with individual CPR members (n=5)	Verbatim transcripts  Memo	Evidence of reflectivity increasing efficacy  Collective input on next steps
May 7 - 28	Partner PLC work drafting foundational documents	Guiding Statements  Unit Planning Guidelines & exemplar  Routines/Expectations	Increasing clarity on goals; the ‘how’ for learner-centered CLRP learning

## APPENDIX L: CODING SCHEME

Codes	Notes
<b>Instructional Strategies</b>	
• Modeling	Explicit teacher modeling of tasks
• Guided Practice	Students in readiness or interest groups focused on a task with specific learning outcomes
• Independent Practice	Students working on independent tasks
• Personal/Cultural connections	Students or teachers making personal/cultural connections (related to cultural responsiveness below)
• Interaction Structures	The use of purposeful, extended, structured interaction between/among students for learning
• Direct Instruction/Instructions	Teachers giving direct instruction/instructions
<b>Literacy Strand Focus</b>	
• Speaking/Listening	Explicit teaching/learning focused on speaking/listening skills
• Reading	Explicit teaching/learning focused on reading skills
• Writing	Explicit teaching/learning time focused on writing skills
<b>Student Talk</b>	
• Mother Tongue	Students use of mother tongue (structured/purposeful vs. chatter)
• English	Students using English in interaction/learning
<b>Co-Teaching Model</b>	
• One teaching/one drifting	Lead teacher teaches, support teacher drifts
• Station Teaching	Lead and support teacher segment learning to small groups or individual students at stations they design
• Parallel Teaching	Lead teacher and support teacher facilitate learning in their respective groups.
• Alternative Teaching	Lead teacher teaches; support teacher implements supplemental activities for whole group, small group or individuals before/after normal lesson.
• Team Teaching	Both lead and support teacher formally teach
<b>Types of Teacher talk (Planning and Acting for Learning)</b>	
• Organizational Task Talk (OTT)	Talk that is organized around general preparation and organization of instruction/next units
• Literacy focused talk (LFT – S, R, W, V_)	Talk that is about a learning focus on a specific literacy strand/task (speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary)

• Disciplinary Content (DC)	Talk focused on learning specific disciplinary content
• Flexible Groupings (FGL or FGI)	Talk focused on grouping students according to literacy levels or in interest groups.
• Culturally Responsive (CR)	Talk focused on evolving content/instruction specific to cultural or individual interests or educational background.
• Deficit Language (DL)	Talk that uses labels for specific students or groups of students (e.g., “low group”)
• Pedagogical Strategies (PS)	Talk focused on the intentional use of specific instructional strategies linked to learning outcomes
• Assessment focused (AF)	Talk focused on assessment strategies and or instructional decisions as a result of assessment
• Scaffolding Language (SL)	Talk focused on the development/use of particular language scaffolds
• Translanguaging (TL)	Talk focused on how, when, why students will use their mother tongue for understanding, clarification, cognitive engagement.
• High Expectations (HE)	Talk focused on stretching students for learning with high expectations

**APPENDIX M: PLANNING MEETING CODING**

Codes for categories of talk	Description/Definition What did the “talk” focus on?	Planning Meeting #1 (February) TN = 105	Planning Meeting #2 (March) TN = 94	Examples of utterances
<b>Literacy</b> Speaking - LS Reading - LR Writing - LW Vocabulary - LV	specific literacy focus or task -- not necessarily on scaffolding	LS - 4 LR - 4 LW - 3 LV - 5	LS - 3 LR - 4 LW - 5 LV - 1	<p>“We will be prepping them about how to ask questions and get information.”</p> <p>“The rest of the day they can write their news article.”</p> <p>“Pre-teach the vocabulary.”</p> <p>“We can bring them back to inference and using evidence.”</p> <p>“Do we need to do explicit reading strategies?”</p>
<b>Scaffolding Language/Learning (SL)</b>	development of particular language scaffolds	SL - 6	SL - 28	<p>“I think they need an example of how the lead gets broken down into paragraphs.”</p> <p>“. . . some sentence starters and add some pictures – they could sort and then write the description.”</p> <p>“For the chalk talk, you’ll create visuals and key words.”</p> <p>“I’ll be using a mentor text.”</p> <p>“For their speaking station, a retelling scaffold with sentence stems to support them through a retelling activity.”</p>

<b>Translanguaging (TL)</b>	how, when and why students will use their mother tongue for understanding, clarification and cognitive engagement	TL - 0	TL - 2	<p>“Do we want them to write in both Mandarin and English?”</p> <p>“Have them write the same word in uniform and in their own language and in another language.”</p>
<b>Flexible Groupings</b> Literacy level based: (FGL) Interest based: (FLI)	grouping students	FGL - 7 FLI - 0	FGL - 9 FLI - 0	<p>“If we’re going to do it by skill, then this is the grouping we’ll follow.”</p> <p>“I think we should mix it – high and low.”</p>
<b>Disciplinary Content Focused: (DC)</b>	disciplinary knowledge or understanding objectives	DC - 14	DC - 13	<p>“I’d like to bring it back to these three things – Buddha’s life, 4 noble truths and 8-fold path.”</p> <p>“We want them to be able to identify key differences between paleolithic and neolithic time periods . . . “</p> <p>“We are looking at elements like characters and theme . . . “</p>
<b>Culturally Responsive (CR)</b>	evolving content/instruction specific to cultural or individual interests or educational background.	CR - 2	CR - 6	<p>“I think Ettore is the only one who goes to church in the class – he can share some rituals.”</p> <p>“ . . . and link them to their own lives.”</p> <p>“What is an important part of your city – making connections.”</p> <p>“We are trying an experiment to see if the boys – who are very into gaming – if we can gear</p>

				<p>their reading toward gaming . . . “</p> <p>“ . . . it will appeal to the students who are artistic.”</p>
<b>Deficit Language (DL)</b>	using labels for a student or groups of students or communicating low expectations	DL - 10	DL - 6	<p>“If you want to use a different organizer for your group, since you take care of the lower ones.”</p> <p>“Find a mentor text for the lower ones.”</p> <p>“I don’t feel they can man the stations themselves.”</p> <p>“We would have never asked for an assignment like that . . . “</p> <p>“If it’s too hard for, like Brian and Alice, to give us one whole sentence, they can just give words.”</p>
<b>Organizational task talk (OTT)</b>	general preparation and organization of instruction; who will do what; next units	OTT - 39	OTT - 10	<p>“Next unit after investigative journalism is sci-fi/fantasy.”</p> <p>“We should try to have another guest speaker for Buddhism.”</p> <p>“I can add in the slides for that.”</p> <p>“Let’s do the instructions on the whiteboard if you’re going to have the timer going.”</p> <p>“We’ve got two lessons next week; we’ll have to spend one lesson on time periods. Friday, block 4 might be a good time to catch up on the foldables.”</p>

				<p>“When we’re working in small groups, we can work with groups 2 and 3 to get them on a Google doc.”</p>
<p><b>Pedagogical Strategies (PS)</b></p>	<p>Talk focused on the intentional use of specific instructional strategies linked to learning outcomes</p>	<p>PS - 12</p>	<p>PS - 6</p>	<p>“What if they tape their speech? They can see themselves.”</p> <p>“Give them a mentor text . . . “</p> <p>“The point is for us to give them individual help and new reading strategies.”</p> <p>“We can hold a mini fish-bowl.”</p> <p>“I liked the talking chips. Maybe fewer questions.”</p> <p>“For the chalk talk you’ll create visuals and key words. . . “</p> <p>“We haven’t done see-think-wonder for a while, maybe that would set them up for thinking about the differences?”</p> <p>“Let’s talk about guided reading.”</p>
<p><b>Assessment focused (AF)</b></p>	<p>Talk focused on assessment strategies and or instructional decisions as a result of assessment</p>	<p>AF - 3</p>	<p>AF - 3</p>	<p>“I’d like to have a grade for Criterion D for using language – body language, speech and tone. Very good criterion for this activity.”</p> <p>“We can write our observations on the strengths . . . and then we write down next steps . . .</p>



				<p>“ (referring to reading conferences)</p> <p>“They are still learning to work together in groups, so maybe shoulder partners are better.”</p>
<b>High Expectations: HE</b>	extending/pushing students further	HE - 0	HE - 7	<p>“One other extension – use red and green to highlight the descriptors.”</p> <p>“Extension is adding detail and using other examples.”</p> <p>“Extension – find another public work that shows something different.”</p>
<b>References to /use of specific planning resources</b>	Using specific reference materials to plan for learning (may be related to pedagogical strategies)		PR - 2	<p>Second planning observation – PB has the “Can do” descriptors from WIDA out to determine scaffolds that are necessary.</p> <p>“Ginny Rojas has this stuff . . . it shows academic sentence frames, we could laminate them and have them pull them out . . . “</p> <p>“The Kagan packet has (sentence frames), but it’s more for talking and discussion . . . “</p>

## APPENDIX N: PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE

Planning for CLE – “How might we” statements devised from initial round of planning and observation meetings and analysis – what are our next steps?

Question	Materials
How might we develop a clear structure or protocol to guide culturally and linguistically responsive planning for learning?	Learning plan (Rena’s document) Draft of planning questions Co-planning/co-teaching documents Structured interaction/Kagan Structures
How might we utilize more student work and data to plan for focused instruction on specific learning and language outcomes?	Start with WIDA? How do we make students more responsible for their own learning?
How might we increasingly utilize effective principles of learning (including language objectives) and evidence-based instructional strategies and routines (including structured interaction and translanguaging) to boost the cognitive engagement and language learning of all students?	Choosing language objectives Building learning progressions for based on WIDA (use thin-slice focus students) Use of structured interactions Pieces from translanguaging guide
How might we make the best use of our human resources through increasing understanding of roles and responsibilities both in planning for learning and acting for learning in the classroom?	Roles & Responsibilities
How might the teaching and learning focus more on the background and interests of the students (be more culturally responsive)?	Use of Class Mapping activity
To what extent might we modify the ‘guaranteed’ curriculum for these courses in order to be increasingly responsive?	AERO standards (English/SS) Subject overviews Units
How might the WIDA, SIOP and MYP models fit together in SEAL classes? What does this look like?	SIOP practices MYP subject overviews (I&S/L & Lit) WIDA Can do Descriptors
How might we create EAL-wide expectations and routines that support coherent and consistent self-management for learning within the SEAL classes?	Potentially the personalized learning plan draft/goal setting protocol Use of WIDA ‘can do’ descriptors tied to literacy learning objectives.

Learning Exchange  
 March 2, 2018

For: Peter Barrett, Maria Roxas, Casey Moorman, Natasha Bellande, Dean Currie, Rena Brown

Invitation:

Our day will be framed in a community learning exchange or, an opportunity to come together for a period of engaged, deep learning that leads to action – a process that is based on several principles:

- Interdependence and vulnerability – deepening our relationships with one another through authentic dialogue; a cycle of inquiry that leads to collectively constructed action steps that address the challenges we face
- Wisdom of people and place — an understanding that it is those closest to the challenges that have the wisdom to carry out the inquiry and create the action plan
- Balance — between action *and* inquiry. "*Action needs inquiry, and inquiry needs action. Any imbalance can lead to action before thinking on one hand and never acting and only questioning, on the other*" (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson & Militello (2016) p. 78).

Focus	Time	Protocol
Welcome	15 minutes 8:30 - 8:45	Informal greeting and eating Parking Lot
Mindfulness Exercise	5 minutes 8:45 - 8:50	<b>Using Gratitude</b>
Appreciative Circle	10 minutes 8:50 - 9:00	<b>Wow! Statements</b> Transition into what we appreciate about our team here
Learning Intentions	15 minutes 9:00 - 9:15	<b>Elevator Speech</b> You arrive at school on Monday and get into the elevator. A colleague says, “You were on a release day on Friday, what did you accomplish?”
Chalk Talk Goal Consensus	45 minutes 9:15 - 10:00	<b>Essential Questions:</b> What ideas, next steps, wonderings do you have about any of our essential questions? ( <i>Essential questions taken from teacher reflections</i> )
<b>Break 10:00 -10:15</b>		

<p>Student Circle</p> <p>Reflection about using focal students/selecting goals from WIDA to begin the planning for learning --</p>	<p>10:15 - 11:00</p>	<p><i>(Use of Class Mapping Activity)</i></p> <p>Choosing three focus students: If we were going to plan for learning for these focal students, what goals would we set in literacy to move them along the English language acquisition continuum?</p> <p>Goal: Focus on where students are, where they need to go next, group students, connect to learning goals.</p>
<p>Inquiry to Action</p>	<p>11:00 - 12:00</p>	<p>In teaching pairs, look at learning over the course of the next 4 weeks - What are the focus literacy/language areas?</p> <p>What are the focus disciplinary thinking/understanding areas and how can these be focused on cultural relevance? (Connect to learning outcomes)</p>
<p><b>Lunch 12:00 - 12:30</b></p>		
<p>Inquiry to Action</p>	<p>12:30 - 3:30</p>	<p>Planning for learning in original groups What kind of planning sheet is going to work for you?</p>
<p>Closing Circle</p>	<p>3:30 - 4:00</p>	<p><b>Elevator Speech:</b> What does your Monday morning Elevator Speech contain now? What are we committing to practicing in our planning &amp; teaching over the next three weeks? Three cheers</p>

**APPENDIX O: COMPARISON TABLE OF CODING SCHEME FOR PLANNING**

**MEETINGS**

Codes for categories of talk	Description/Definition What did the “talk” focus on?	Numbers of utterances PM #1 TN = 118	Numbers of utterances PM #2 TN = 94
<b>Literacy Speaking - LS Reading - LR Writing - LW Vocabulary - LV</b>	specific literacy focus -- not necessarily on scaffolding	LS - 4 LR - 0 LW - 4 LV - 6	LS - 1 LR - 3 LW - 6 LV - 2
<b>Scaffolding Language/ Learning (SL)</b>	development of particular language scaffolds	SL - 5	SL - 29
<b>Translanguaging (TL)</b>	how, when and why students will use their mother tongue for understanding, clarification and cognitive engagement	TL - 3	TL - 1
<b>Flexible Groupings Literacy level based: (FGL) Interest based: (FLI)</b>	grouping students	FGL - 7 FLI - 0	FGL - 8 FLI - 0
<b>Disciplinary Content Focused: (DC)</b>	disciplinary knowledge or understanding objectives	DC - 13	DC - 12
<b>Culturally Responsive (CR)</b>	evolving content/instruction specific to cultural or individual interests or educational background.	CR - 2	CR - 5
<b>Deficit Language (DL)</b>	using labels for a student or groups of students or communicates low expectations	DL - 7	DL - 7 (6/7 in one co-teaching pair)
<b>Organizational task talk (OTT)</b>	general preparation and organization of instruction; next units	OTT - 23	OTT - 9
<b>High Expectations: HE</b>	extending/pushing students further	HE - 0	HE: 7

## APPENDIX P: COMPARISON TABLE IN CODING CLASSROOM

### OBSERVATIONS

Category	Description	Observation 1	Observation 2	Examples
Co-teaching Model	Models to effectively utilize co-teachers in the classroom	1 – Team-teaching  3 – One Teaching, One Drifting	1 - Station teaching  2 – Team teaching	
Extended, structured interaction opportunities vs. group work	Instances within class where students are set up in <b>purposeful, structured interactions</b> to process content/concepts or practice skills.	1 – matching activity 1 – pairs practicing questions 1 – talking chips, chalk talk  Group/pair work w/no structure	Word list activity 1-2-4 Shoulder partners Kagan group structure used  Reading/retelling of quick writes	Kagan Cooperative Structures  Structured station activities  Protocols for interaction  Talking Chips
Flexible student groupings	Purposeful use of grouping for learning for interest or readiness	Same table groups for 80 mins.  partners; writing groups (both leveled)  Quizlet groups	Kagan table groups (mixed)  Ocean groups – homogenous for writing with differentiated tasks  Station groups  Same table groups for whole lesson	Use of interest-based text selection and grouping accordingly  Ocean groups – differentiated tasks according to readiness
Instruction	Instruction is utilizing a specific teaching pedagogy aimed at teaching a skill (e.g., modeling, guided practice, role playing)	1 Modeling  1 Roleplaying	Lesson of guided practice – already knew routines – processing material using them  Modeling/guided practice x2  Modeling digital learning skill  Modeling - writing	

Instructions	Presenting steps to follow in completing a task	5 – instructions w/independent practice and sharing out (generally whole class)  4 instructions and pair or group following instructions  4 instructions for different activities	3 instructions w/engagements  3 instructions w/engagements  4 instructions w/engagement, but 3 are connected parts w/same focus	“Okay, so we have two columns, fold your page in ½ and write down P and N”
Use of language scaffolds	Tiered use of scaffolds to support different literacy levels including purposeful use of translanguageing	3 – sentence stems, paragraph frame, visuals/words/sentences  1 with model text  3 sentence stems, visuals, repeated listening	Differentiated writing groups  Modeling w/examples  Leveled books  Tiered station activities  Sentence Starters  Paragraph frames	Sentence starters  Paragraph frames  Use of translating tools  Word Walls  Use of pictures/visuals
Clear routines and structures		2 – S-T-W, 3-2-1  0  3 s-t-w, talking chips, popsicle sticks	Kagan, Shoulder partners STW Countdown, Use of timers Ocean groups  Quick write Stations established  S-T-W, dice to choose speaker	Use of timers/time keepers Countdown 3-2-1 Use of Kagan Cooperative Structures Opening routine of See-Think-Wonder
Emphasis on strands of language acquisition: listening/speaking, Reading, writing		Group work – T/L, paragraph writing; 5 mins reading/research	S/L, vocabulary, writing	Listening to video w/headphones  Vocabulary/picture matching

		S/L; writing S/L; vocabulary, L – video	4 stations; guided reading, speaking, analysis (reading) and word watcher  S/L, writing	Writing from paragraph frame or mentor text
Positive reinforcement – community of learners/Warm demander stance	Routines, verbal interaction that demonstrates respectful relationships.	Positive in both – no noticeable difference.		<p>“Thank you, Alvin. Thank you, Erica.”</p> <p>“Can everyone put your hand up like this and pat yourself on the back.”</p> <p>“Jimmy, you need to ask first. How do you ask? May I . . .”</p> <p>“No, pronounce it correctly, not badly.”</p> <p>“Two expectations, be respectful and professional and if Mr. B and I raise our hands, what do you do?”</p> <p>“Stand quietly behind your chairs.”</p>
Personal/cultural connections	Specific learning opportunities geared to cultural responsiveness	0 0 0	1 – cities they know/like  1 books of own choosing	“Now, Harry has moved on to find examples from his own country.”
High Expectations		0 0 0	2  1 stretching writing time  1 stretching talking time with English  1 stretching writing - with every word you	<p>“What else can you use? Your computer? No, your brain, your team.”</p> <p>“If you think you are finished, review your work and see if you can add more.”</p>



			<p>should be writing 3 sentences</p>	<p>“Now, Harry, are we writing one-word answers or in sentences?”</p> <p>“Leo, how many sentences have your written? I know you can write more . . . “</p> <p>“Write as many words as you can . . . “</p>
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## **APPENDIX Q: SEAL PROGRAM FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

### **Guiding Statements: Sheltered EAL Program**

#### **WHY Sheltered EAL:**

As an IB World School, Hayward supports and celebrates emerging bilingualism and multilingualism. As such, we provide differentiated programs such as our Sheltered EAL (SEAL) program for students new to English in Grades KG2 - G8. This program supports specialized instruction in developing English academic language proficiency and transitioning to the learning and academic culture of the school while rooting language acquisition in important disciplinary concepts and ways of thinking. Sheltered EAL provides a caring community of learners and teachers within a culturally and linguistically responsive environment that challenges all students to high levels of emotional and cognitive engagement in order to become increasingly fluent in English while succeeding socially, emotionally and academically at Hayward.

#### **WHAT are our aspirations/life-long learning stances we're after:**

- Students will enjoy learning language and understand the new perspectives and intercultural understandings that language learning brings.
- Students will continue to evolve their identity by maintaining pride in their own language and culture, continuing to develop their mother-tongue and seeking opportunities to expand their multilingualism.
- Students will thoughtfully and fluently participate in personal, academic and professional discourse in English.

#### **HOW will we engage students in learning:**

Through purposefully connecting the SEAL students to other students to support their transition and social-emotional well-being.

Through intentional, bounded use of translanguaging across the disciplines to ensure cognitive engagement and social-emotional well-being while developing English fluency.

Through deliberate focus on creating a caring community of learners in the classroom including establishing agreed-upon expectations and routines where cultural and linguistic diversity is known, understood and valued as an asset for everyone's learning.

By using the cultural knowledge and background of students to enrich and create connections for learning including building/accessing background knowledge, selection of disciplinary ideas and concepts, and texts and contexts for learning.

Through utilizing appropriate grade-level and proficiency literacy learning outcomes (AERO English Language Arts, WIDA can-do descriptors) to support and extend every student's literacy learning and create explicit over-time language objectives tied to disciplinary learning.

Through the planning of daily extended, structured interaction opportunities that require increasingly elaborated responses and utilize intentional and flexible groupings of students.

Through explicitly and systematically employing the agreed-upon progress monitoring tools in the language domains to support over-time evidence of progress, goal-setting and challenge for each student.

Through ensuring that, daily, the language strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing are interwoven to support language acquisition (according to the % agreement?)

Through goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback on practice opportunities and products that are thoughtfully chunked to support engagement, confidence and learning.

By utilizing effective language scaffolding strategies based on language acquisition studies and adhering to the guidelines regarding when, where, how students use scaffolds (e.g., Google translate).

By focusing on rich, regular feedback to students through frequent formative assessment.

By committing to utilizing the principles of SIOP.

## Co-Teaching Roles and Responsibilities

	EAL Teacher	Disciplinary Teacher
<b>Pre-Unit Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Connecting disciplines for application and transfer (formally)</li> <li>● Pre-assessment focused on language acquisition standards</li> <li>● Scaffolding focused on language objectives and ways of disciplinary thinking</li> <li>● Anticipating language challenges in curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-assessment increasingly focused on disciplinary understanding/skills</li> <li>● Gathering relevant content materials for multiple levels - articles, stories etc.</li> <li>● Clearly establish an end goal for the unit and a timeline to guide progress</li> </ul>
	<b>Shared</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure pre-assessments are kept and used for further planning</li> <li>● Plan for formative assessments combining literacy and discipline goals</li> <li>● Making decisions about appropriate co-teaching models to be used with a preference for alternative teaching/station teaching</li> </ul>	
<b>Daily Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updating/creating new scaffolds</li> <li>● Alerting subject teachers to important updates outside of their classes</li> <li>● Scaffolding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updating core materials and replacing where necessary</li> <li>● Alerting EAL teacher to changes decided on by department</li> </ul>
	<b>Shared</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Language Objectives</li> <li>● Content objectives</li> <li>● Decide on roles and rotations to best support students</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep WIDA data up to date and share with subject teachers</li> <li>● Monitor student language progress and track groups accordingly</li> <li>● Keep subject teacher informed of progress across subject areas and support use of students' strengths and successes in other disciplines</li> <li>● Scaffolding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure assessments are relevant and based on material studied</li> <li>● Share assessment materials within a reasonable time before use for adaptation/scaffolding</li> <li>● Alignment with MYP criteria</li> </ul>

	<b>Shared</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure assessments are kept and used for further planning</li> <li>• Both teachers to grade assessments - ensure balance of language and subject perspectives</li> </ul>

## EXPECTED ROUTINES SEAL CLASSES

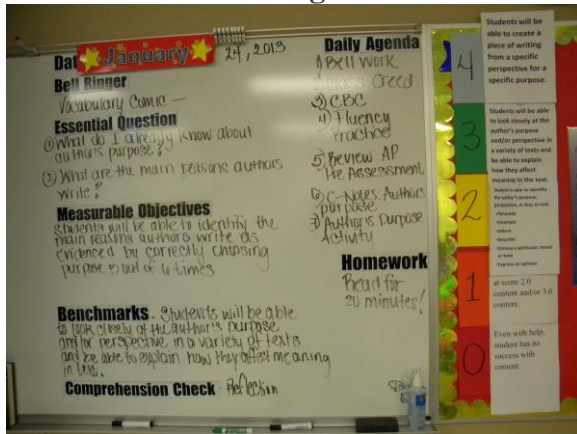
*Disclaimer: I do not know the formula to the perfect classroom. Teaching is an art (and a little bit of science). I still have a lot to learn. These are some ideas that work for my current students:*

### Routines

#### From Start to Finish:

- Students line up and greet (both teachers as they walk into class) “Good morning, Ms. Moorman and Ms. Nicholas.” Students should also greet their classmates/team when they sit in their group.
- Every class should start with a warm-up/bell ringer/entrance ticket (Ex. Think/Pair/Share)
- Display, define, review content and language objectives (each class can be different – ex. Science, we dictate both objectives and have students write it in their notebook, I and S, we read together.)
- Refer to common board configuration (objectives, date, homework, vocabulary, essential questions, big idea, agenda, IB lingo, common questions, etc.)

#### Common Board Configuration



- Start with a spiral review - touch on what was already learned, (building or activating background knowledge)
- Students work in Kagan groups

#### Kagan Groups



- Use data to drive instruction (Frequent formative assessment, CFAs, display data, portfolio with a collection of student work and how they are improving with WIDA-can do descriptors)
- Rigor is evident (Pose HOTS questions, use Blooms/DOK, and provide “think time” for all students to process at their pace)
- Teacher talk time is limited (use gradual release method – explicit, model, group, individual)

## The Gradual Release Model

### TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

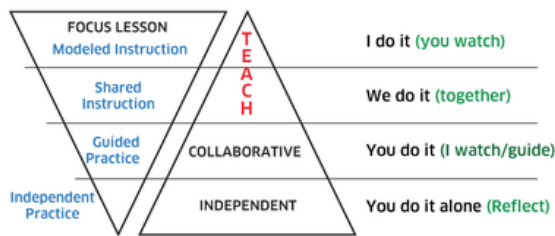


Figure 1 The Gradual Release Model

- SIOP strategies are evident
- Brain breaks (every 20 minutes or as needed for middle school students, different for younger students)
- Use common language (laptops or MacBook, bathroom or toilet) and common note-taking strategies (Cornell Notes)
- Revisit objectives, word walls
- Every class should end with an exit ticket/activity (4/3/2/1)
- Write homework in planner and sign/stamp
- After class, teacher reflection (what went well, Plus/Delta)

Remember: Every moment in the class has a language opportunity – “Excuse me”, “May I borrow a pencil?”

Possible Sentence Frames (with visuals and translation):

- “May I go to the ..... (toilet)?”
- “May I ask .... (student name) a question in .... (home language)?”
- “Great job, ....(student name)!”
- “May I borrow a ....?”

### Kagan promotes active engagement:

- Variety of Cooperative learning structures used daily (students know names of structures)
- Students sitting in a group of four with Kagan mat to remind students of their number/letter

- Assign student roles (timekeeper, translator, roller, word wizard, illustrator, etc.)
- Weekly Teambuilding/Class building activities (short and minimal language)
- Class Signals (attention)
- Team Handshakes/Chants
- Student praise (specific and should come from both teachers and students)
- Expectations posted and reviewed (emphasized)

### **Classroom Environment:**

#### **Positive Behavior System (PBS):**

#### **Increase motivation, Lower Affective Filter (see folder)**

- “Gotcha Goods”
- Specific Praise: “I like how (student) is...” “Thank you for raising your hand...”
- Use students’ names (avoid asking for English/Western name) when speaking to students and move eye level (don’t tower over them)

### **High Expectations:**

#### **Teachers:**

- Adopt a growth mindset <https://www.districtadministration.com/article/growth-projections-k12>
- Actively use technology (Google Classroom, Flip Grid, etc.)
- Celebrate and encourage diversity and perspectives
- Aware and avoid cultural faux pas (making a student look in your eyes, etc.)
- Encourage (students should be getting involved outside of class (CCA, sports)
- Provide translanguaging opportunities and student choice
- Know their students (WIDA, Lexile, etc., strengths, learning style (Multiple Intelligence)
- Firm, fair, a warm demander
- Participate in “EAL Committee”

#### Possible EAL Committee:

- Assist with EAL buddy system
- Promote and celebrate translanguaging, mother tongue programs, and diversity of student body
- Coordinate professional development opportunities (What Works Workshops)
- Liaise with middle school office and SEAL/MEAL program
- Create and update EAL resource page for middle school teachers
- Collaborate with language departments to create a "Language Week"
- Promote Cultural and Linguistic best practices/initiatives (“Show and Tell” sessions)
- Network with local EAL programs

#### **Students:**

- Have 5 expectations or less (keep it simple) - they should be posted and revisited often

I have two (Be professional and be respectful)

Other Ideas:

- For ideas on a fluid routine, read “First Days of School” by Harry Wong

## **SEAL UNIT PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Responsibilities for building unit planners -- Designated SEAL disciplinary teacher/content teacher (CCA free day for all SEAL teachers)

Core resource lists -- disciplinary and language

- Leveled Disciplinary resources - Discipline teacher responsibility
- Resources for language acquisition - EAL teacher

### **Unit Guidelines for Semester I:**

- 4-5-week Learning Sprints as units; 4 learning sprints in first semester
- Units to be delivered across 6-8 semester 1; Semester 2 students begin to mirror Grade level curriculum (with continued emphasis on literacy and continued emphasis on the most CR areas of content)
- Grades 6-8 - each of the SEAL discipline areas: Choose 2-3 key disciplinary skills/ways of thinking and 2-3 disciplinary conceptual understanding areas (lens of culturally responsive is important!)
- Each learning sprint - focus on 2 speaking and listening skills (from ELA standards), one reading skill and one writing skill (from CC literacy standards) GROWTH expected in each of the focused literacy standards during the sprint which mandates pre-assessment, monitoring formative assessments/guided practice and post assessment.
- Each learning sprint - Max 3 ATL skills that correspond to the literacy skills and disciplinary ways of thinking
- Semester to have a storyline that guides and connects teaching & learning
- Tiered vocabulary list with 3-5 Command Terms (connected to significant disciplinary ways of thinking/literacy skills) as Tier 2
- WIDA can do descriptors to be placed underneath the literacy learning outcomes for each learning sprint - for students. (not put into planners)

### **Semester II**

- Continuing SEAL students - units begin to mirror most CLRP elements of GL curriculum -- to be developed in Qtr. 2 (Nov.)
- Tiered instruction (beginning students vs. continuing students)



## APPENDIX R: AUGUST COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE

### Goals:

1. Create a Professional Learning Community as co-teachers who are focused on building strong and equitable classroom communities of learners while implementing culturally and linguistically responsive practice.
2. Establish a process of inquiry within the SEAL program that leads to thoughtful student-centered action coupled with reflection. This process seeks to respect the wisdom of each of us with the understanding that, together, we can do more than we can do alone - both to support our professional practice and to drive engaged student learning.

### Outline for Community Learning Exchange #1:

Monday, August 6, 3:00 - 4:30; A6-01

Protocol	Inquiry Question	Purpose	Artefact/evidence
<b>Journey Line of Diversity</b>	What are three defining experiences with diversity that have informed your cultural identity?	To reflect on own experiences with diversity and how it informs your cultural identity	Individual Journey Lines
<b>This is the person . . .</b>	What past individual from your journey line should be sitting with you here today to support your ongoing growth as an advocate/champion for diversity?	Reflect on cultural identity as a significant mediator for own and others' learning and learning stances	Verbal reflection
<b>Inner Circle/Outer Circle</b>  <i>(Peter, Maria, Casey, Natasha, Dean - inner circle)</i>	What were the most important take-aways from your participation in the Action Research Cycles last year focused on CLRP and the SEAL classes that you believe impacted your teaching and student learning?	To bring to the forefront the wisdom of the people and place.	Observations/memo
<b>Introduction of Foundational Documents</b>  Overview/ disciplinary group discussion	What are the foundational documents that were developed as a result of last year's Action Research, that will inform and support our evolving CLRP?	To overview the documents, allow for questions and consider priorities for tomorrow's CLE.	Foundational document package
<b>4-corners reflection</b>	As I reflect over today's learning exchange, what am I taking away from it?	To reflect for planning and action.	4-corners sheet

**APPENDIX S: STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH PARTY**

<b>Activate &amp; Engage</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Opening Circle/I'm IN	Inclusion activity to create community	Circle whole group, Introductions: Name, position, # of years, One word that describes how the guiding statements make you feel and end with "and I'm IN"	5 mins  Questions on Screen
Small Fire  *Tweeter at each small fire *Maximum diversity *Starter: person who's been here the shortest amount of time *Time keeper (w/phone) the person who's been here longest	Grounding activity to share initial thoughts; hear everyone's voice	Questions: What do <b>we</b> need to BE to live into these guiding statements? With these guiding statements at the center of our daily actions, interactions and decisions, what does Hayward feel like? Look like? Sound like?	6 mins/1 min each  Questions on screen/ timer
<b>Explore &amp; Discover</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Expo Center  Use countdown timer for each of the three sections	Explore deeply one element of the guiding statements: Vision Mission Values International Mindedness Share thinking and add to thinking	Each small fire group has one element of the guiding statements on poster paper  <i>Feel</i> <i>See</i> <i>Hear</i>  Explores ideas (8 minutes)  Split into A/B - A's stay at expo poster, B's browse and share/add to thinking of other groups (3 minutes) B's go to Expo poster and A's browse and add to thinking of others. (3 minutes)	15 minutes  Timer on screen

Organize & Integrate	Purpose	Description	Time
<p>Tweet</p> <p>*Simile(s) as an addition *Crafting tweet (individually do and share and co-construct or select best or as one whole group) Possible sentence starters (put on board?): SAIS rocks because our new <i>mission statement</i> (or whichever part of the guiding statements they have) compels us to . . . and BE (simile)</p> <p>Envision this . . . Together, we . . . Living our (mission, vision, etc.) means . . .</p>	<p>To capture the inspirational essence of your part of the guiding statements in 140 characters or less - to be tweeted out @SAISrocks</p>	<p>Return to small fire groups and your part of the guiding statements and co-construct a 140 word tweet that captures the essence</p> <p>Share out to group; tweet out w/photo or related graphic and return to Reagan theatre</p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>



